

THE
HISTORY
OF
LADY CAROLINE RIVERS.

VOL. II.

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THE
H I S T O R Y
OF
LADY CAROLINE RIVERS,
IN A
SERIES OF LETTERS.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

By Miss ELIZABETH TODD.

VOL. II.

L O N D O N.

PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR.

1788.

THE

HISTORY

OF

LADY CAROLINE RIVERS

IN A

LETTER OF LETTERS

TO HER

BY MISS MARY WILKINSON

LONDON

1794

PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR

AT THE

THE
HISTORY, &c.

LETTER THE FIRST.

LORD RAKE TO JAMES RATTLE, ESQ;

Cavendish Square.

WHAT an incorrigible dog thou art, James! You'll ask, How? which way? in what? who said it? and a hundred thousand other questions in a breath. Have a little patience, and I will inform you of the whole affair. You may evidently discern, by the stile in which I address myself to you, that I have resumed all my former *gaieté de cœur*. You may thank my invincible perseverance for that, you'll cry, or had I suffered you to

remain in the whining manner you begun, you would not have recovered your *gaieté de cœur* quite so soon. Fair and softly, not quite so fast, James; I have permitted you to proceed thus far, to render your surprise the greater: but now I must solicit the favor, that you will, in return, permit me to interrupt you just here, without giving offence, and, by way of preface, I will inform you, that Lady Caroline Rivers, whom you have had the honour to be in company with several times, (through my means though, you will recollect, James,) sent for your humble servant the other day. I, who you know am always attentive to the females in general, and very punctual to any commands they chuse to inflict, waited on her. Well, as I was walking up stairs, for you are to understand I was introduced into her dressing-room, I heard a d——d shuffling, and when the servant announced my arrival, her ladyship appeared in evident confusion, though she endeavoured to conceal it by asking me about an auction, and then changed the discourse to an amour, and wished to recommend me a wife of her own acquaintance. I felt myself very much embarrassed, and drawing out my handkerchief, to conceal my emotion, dropped your graceful letter,

wished

wished her Ladyship good morning, and withdrew; though not before I had invited myself to breakfast the following morning: It arrived, when I, previous to my engagement, prepared for Berkley-square, where I had the honor of a tête-à-tête conversation with Lady Caroline.— The tea equipage was removed, and her Ladyship presented a letter, which I, not imagining to be yours, received very graciously; but, upon opening it, any one might, to use the vulgar phrase, have struck me down with a feather. I was sensible Lady Caroline had read it by her discourse; however, I summoned the greatest assurance that I was able to assume, walked up to the window where her Ladyship was standing; but I give you my honour, Jem, that it would be the safest way for you, nay, it will secure you from the censorious and perpetual clack in your ears of every female in England, was you to take my advice, and avoid the sight of Lady Caroline; for she is so much incensed against you, that I dread the consequence of your meeting. Nay, she tells me, that she is astonished the earth should be burthened with such a monster as your worthy consequential self!—There's for you, James; but it is a lady says it, you

will remember, therefore revenge would be deemed below a gentleman. Now you will exclaim, What is Lady Caroline, or any other Lady to me, if they cannot in conscience approve of my free living?—Why don't you proceed in your narrative? I answer, *parce que vous, vous ete prompte*; therefore, I wish you to recollect that patience is an essential remedy for the most poignant anguish. However, to ease you of a troublesome weight of conjectures, I think I must inform you, that after sufficiently venting her spleen upon me, for corresponding with such a licentious libertine, as her Ladyship terms your worship, she very deliberately changed the discourse to that of the preceding day, and urged me to return a favorable answer in behalf of her fair friend, who was at that instant waiting the issue of our conference. This declaration, which she uttered with a very serious countenance, startled me, and I now began to wish that I had not made my appearance. However, I told her, when I found every excuse to avoid seeing the lady fail, that I had fixed an unalterable resolution never to unite with any Lady, however nobly descended, but the one whom I had, by villainous and perfidious arts, seduced. But all my rhetoric
could

could not prevail over Lady Caroline, who observed, there could be no danger in an introduction; and I absolutely must, and should see the Lady. All my remonstrances were in vain; therefore I was obliged, or at least thought I was, to be ushered into her Ladyship's dressing-room again, for the second time. To tell you the truth, Jem, I imagined she was in love with me herself. But how was I astonished, upon entering a room which her Ladyship conducted me to, when the first object that presented itself to my view, was no other than my dear and much injured Harriot! She was half dead with apprehension at sight of me, and running to Lady Caroline, fainted in her arms. It seems she has been in the captivity of Lady Caroline's woman from the time she left me. When she recovered, I implored, intreated, nay, knelt to her, to obtain forgiveness, and her consent to unite with me. The first she instantly granted; but the second request, had it not been for Lady Caroline, I firmly believe she would never have consented to. However, the scene was changed almost instantaneously, when her Ladyship interposed in my behalf, and used her authority in so tender a manner, that the dear girl at last consented to crown

my felicity, which I have fixed for to-morrow. Now will your Worship exclaim against me for a romantic fool, in indulging melancholy ideas; otherwise you will tell me I might, with perseverance, have gained Lady Caroline's *charmant même*.—No, believe me, Jem, I could never have enjoyed one moment's happiness at the idea of seducing a gentleman's daughter, and then leave her to poverty and ruin.--- But it is absurd to talk to you in this stile, who are so fine a gentleman; yet, you must endure it, and consider, I am upon a plan of reformation, which would not be the worse for you, were you to follow my example and marry—I was just going to say, your city mistress; but, I presume, that would be too contemptible a match for your ambitious imaginations. But, seriously, Jem, you have not treated that unfortunate young woman so tenderly as her sentiments of you deserve.

I am sent for in haste.

ADIEU.

LET-

LETTER THE SECOND.

LADY CAROLINE RIVERS TO LADY
LOUISA BEAUMONT.

Berkley-square.

UPON my word, your Ladyship will excuse me, I really think, at present, you are too young for a moralist; but I presume you intend, in a short time, to take your flight towards the ethereal regions; and then, should any one think proper to enquire after your Ladyship, you will, no doubt, permit me, your once dear friend, to repeat, in a truly poetic strain,

That pity touch'd her breast with woe,
To see a World so lost below;
And therefore she has ta'en her flight,
To espy if all above goes right;
But when she finds 'tis we're to blame,
She'll quite renounce us with her name.

There, child! do pray consider if that will not be quite apropos for an epitaph on your tomb stone. However, I don't intend to part with you yet, therefore your ethereal journey must be postponed for the present. Well might your Ladyship imagine I should say you are always moralizing, when you send me no other news but what you are convinced will give one the vapours. And now I have a mind to send this away without informing you of any thing further concerning my new friend; yet, as I am not of a cruel disposition, I cannot endure to cause anxiety in the breast of one I love, for which reason you are to understand, that the dear amiable girl changed her situation yesterday; and they are, at present, at our house, till his Lordship's is fitted up for their reception. Here, I presume, you would wish to be informed, in what kind of stile the nuptials were celebrated. Well, then, to oblige you, I will take the trouble of writing a description. Know then, that at nine o'clock in the morning, four carriages attended at the door, viz. The Earl of Hockinstone's, Lord Rake's, Lord Rivers's, and Lady Caroline's; I must include my own, you know, to close the procession. My father led Miss Harriot to
his

his carriage, as he had insisted upon Lord Rake's receiving her from his hands; the Earl of Courtly led my affected cousin to Lord Rake's; Lord Rivers led the Hon. Miss Seymour to his own carriage; and Lord Rake led me to mine. In this manner we proceeded to St. George's church, Hanover-square, where the ceremony was performed, and we returned to our carriages; Lord and Lady Rake in their own; the Earl of Hockinstone, and the Hon. Miss Seymour in his; Lord Rivers, with Miss Robinson in his; the Earl of Courtly, with your humble servant in hers.— Now will your Ladyship's curiosity be on the wing of conjecture, to divine if possible, whether this same Earl is not a new lover. Don't look so surpris'd, Louisa, for I tell you, the more company I am introduced to, the greater is the admiration I excite. Oh Heavens! I hear you exclaim, How vain the minx is of her personal accomplishments, now that she has quitted our rural shades to join the polite circle. Do, pray child, let me entreat you to leave off that malicious epithet, that you have learned since my residence in Berkley-square; and don't be so unpolite, if you are envious of my much admired wit and beauty, as to show it; for nothing

is allowed to be so unpolite in this fashionable town, as that of envy, at least to all appearance. You may rely on my honor, when I inform you, that was any of my former country friends to see me at the opera, the regatta, or a concert, it would be an utter impossibility to recognize any thing in my present behaviour that corresponded with that of their former friend. Could you believe it, my dear, I am at last brought to cares, to outward appearance, the person I most cordially despise in my heart: nay, don't start at a sincere and voluntary confession; for I tell you, was it not for dissimulation, I should absolutely be at open war with all our belles, beaus I must not include, because I am confident they would help me as far as admiration could extend; but you know that would not be quite so pleasing, when there was no female present to observe, with stifled envy, the homage that I perpetually receive from those who stile themselves, my humble and eternal slaves.— Here another exclamation ensues, of, Oh the presumptuous baggage! Well, Heaven defend me from court complaisance, if friendship is evinced in words alone!— Well, well, Louisa, no more moralizing; for absolutely I cannot, nor will not endure

dure it; besides, you are to consider, child, that a celebrated belle, who is universally admired for wit, beauty, and accomplishments, far superior to any of her sex, is not to be catechised by a prudish antiquated country virgin. No, my once dear friend, I can assure you that it will not be allowed. However, to satisfy your curious conjectures relative to Earl Courtly, I must make an effort to subdue pride and self-consequence, while I inform you that this nobleman is a confidential friend of my brother, and one who accompanied him in his travels, therefore is well acquainted with every amour his Lordship has been engaged in: Yet, would you believe it, child, the wretch, when I charge him with the knowledge of my brother's secrets, pleads ignorance; but I'll match him for it. Yet this is nothing to do with the commencement of my acquaintance with the Earl, you will say. Bless me, how hasty you are in interrupting one. However, that shall not compel me to desist from informing your Ladyship, that so faithful a friend to my brother, remained not long a stranger to his fair sister, whose penetrating observation instantly discerned, or at least imagined, that a due respect was all the adoration she received from her brother's

ther's friend ; therefore not perfectly satisfied with respect alone, at the time her vanity taught her to imagine the gentleman cherished tender sensations within his breast for her aspiring Ladyship, she left no charm unaccomplished to inspire him with a tender passion. The bait was too alluring to pass unperceived by his Earlship. As I never rendered a pause in my behaviour necessary, till he had absolutely discovered the secret, which is a month since, in that time I have completed a hundred conquests ; but out of them all, Lord Rake chose to invite Earl Courtly alone to his wedding, as the only one worthy of that honor ; for you are to understand his Lordship is on a plan of reformation, for which reason he will not enter into the society of any gentleman, but those who are truly modest. There's for you ! Now sure I have something to boast of, and for the future never let any one say it is an impossibility for a female to reclaim a libertine, when they are resolutely determined to do it. Bless me, what a *faux pas* I was going to commit ? What's that ? you ask. I have never wrote an account of our wedding-dresses. That would have been an unpardonable fault, indeed,

deed, you answer. But how must I begin? Oh, with the bride, of course— Well, then, she was dress'd in blue silk, her father's fancy when her intended marriage with the squire was in agitation, only with an alteration Lord Rake thought proper to have added. Her father, on a similar occasion, proposed it should be plain, whereas his Lordship chose one spotted with silver. It was really beautiful to a degree. Her hair was dress'd delightfully becoming; she wore a dress hat made according to her own fancy, and indeed her Ladyship, when dress'd, made such an elegant appearance, that you, my dear Louisa, would have been delighted, had you seen her. Nay, her dress, *tout ensemble*, met with such approbation from the *beau monde*, that I question very much whether any one will entertain the presumptuous idea of deciding what shall be the reigning fashion without her Ladyship's concurrence. So much for the bride; now for the bride's maids, two in number, and in which my Ladyship had the honor to be included one, and the Honourable Miss Seymour was chosen without opposition for the other. As we were both dress'd alike, you will be satisfied

tisfied if I inform you of mine, which was white and silver. Our heads were ornamented with dress hats of the newest fashion. So much for the bride's maids! Now for the bridegroom, who wore a plain suit of puce colour, and indeed I thought he appeared much handsomer that day than I had ever observed. In the evening we had a ball, at which we had a numerous assemblage of persons of the first rank. Lady Rake seems very anxious for a reconciliation with her father; I have therefore promised to write to that gentleman in her behalf, who cannot, I am confident, refuse suffering an immediate reconciliation to take place.—But here is an interruption; Lady Rake insists upon finishing my epistle to you, child.—And so I will, Lady Caroline, resistance is in vain; for absolutely I must begin a correspondence with Lady Louisa Beaumont, and your letter will serve by way of introduction, my dear; but in the first place you must inform me what kind of a disposition your friend is of. Oh, the malicious creature, she is apprehensive, my dear Lady Louisa, that I may in time share your friendship with her, therefore solemnly protests that I shall find it out.

However,

However, I must beg the favor of your Ladyship to send me a hint that I may improve upon, in your next. And in the mean time believe that I remain

Your's sincerely,

HARRIOT RAKE.



LET-

LETTER THE THIRD.

LADY CAROLINE RIVERS TO LADY
LOUISA BEAUMONT.

Berkley Square.

WHAT a fortunate circumstance it is to be possessed of that delightful and wonderful charm, called prescience. Who has it? I know your curiosity will enquire. Myself, to be sure, child; and to make you certain that my assertions are true, I will acquaint you with a secret which, I am confident, will rejoice you exceedingly in the perusal. I told you in my last, that my intentions were to write to the Honourable Mr. —, and inform him of Miss Harriot's fortunate marriage. I had begun the letter for that purpose: On a sudden I stopped, to reflect on the behaviour of that gentleman towards his daughter,

daughter. How far different, exclaimed I to myself, was the behaviour of this gentleman to that of my affectionate father on a similar occasion! How tenderly did he embrace his dear Caroline, at the time he put her in the possession of the fortune which his design had been to present to the man whose fate it might be to unite with me, on the nuptial-day. But then, I thought again, was it not my amiable brother, by his generous solicitude to serve a sister, that in a manner compelled my father to accomplish the noble deed that himself had begun. Ah, poor Harriot, sighed I, indeed thou had no brother to reason with thy father; or if thou hadst had one, very possibly he might not have possessed a generous disposition equal to that of mine. In the midst of this reverie, an idea suggested itself to my mind, whether the letter, of which your Ladyship has a copy, was ever wrote by the Honourable Mr. — to his daughter, or whether, as has since proved true, the woman, who was wilfully the chief occasion of Miss Harriot's elopement, did not indite and send it unknown to her father. I thought, by questioning my Lord, I should satisfy my conjectures concerning it before I finished my letter.

At

At the same time, I fixed a resolution to be fully informed of the whole affair, even though his Lordship evinced a desire to avoid an explanation, it being absolutely necessary, for the design of reconciling them to each other. And indeed it was a fortunate moment wherein the idea occurred to my mind; for had I sent the one I begun, it is very evident that I, in the firm hopes of a speedy reconciliation taking place, should have been the innocent cause of rendering it unattainable for ever. For upon my questioning his Lordship concerning it, he made no hesitation of discovering the whole, which was, that himself had desired that vile woman to intercept, if possible, whatever letters Miss Harriot should send to her father, and in return to write that cruel answer, in hopes of putting an end to all future correspondence between them. The instant I received this essential piece of intelligence from his Lordship, I judged it the most prudent method to conceal the truth from her Ladyship's father; and, as it could not be the means of injuring any one, substitute an innocent falsehood, by informing him, that Miss Harriot had resided with me from the time of her quitting his house. This we judged might pass

pass very well, as in the course of their cohabitation, Miss Harriot had not visited any one, nor frequented any kind of public amusements, but at the assembly where I first saw her, and which she had been at but once. She was not known, and then her residence with me, all conspired to render the innocent fraud upon the father practicable. I have therefore promised them that I would write to the Honourable Mr. — this post. But your Ladyship's correspondence has such a fascinating power in it, that positively I could not resist the violent inclination I found within me of writing to you. I now must leave this trifling subject, and prepare for another, more essential to the future repose of Lady Rake. In the mean time I subscribe myself my Louisa's sincere and affectionate friend,

CAROLINE RIVERS.

LET-

LETTER THE FOURTH.

LADY CAROLINE RIVERS TO THE HON-
OURABLE MR. FITZHUGH.

Berkley-square.

SIR,

I Make no doubt but you will be surprised at receiving a letter from a person who is an entire stranger to you, though I have the honour to be personally acquainted with one of your nearest relations. The connection which I have just mentioned is the occasion of my taking the liberty to address you in behalf of your only child, who has resided with me from the time her father suffered his passion to gain an ascendancy over his reason. Pardon the expression, Sir; for my intentions are to write the sincere dictates of my heart,

heart, which cannot but compassionate Miss Harriot's hard fate, and point out to you the many errors you have been, though unwittingly, led into by the insinuations of an artful, designing, base, and treacherous creature. These are the only appellations which a person who is not entirely destitute of every spark of humanity for a virtuous sufferer, can possibly bestow on such a monster as the woman to whom you have hitherto lent an ear of attention, in prejudice to the only remaining pledge of a once amiable, but long departed wife, whom, if I may rely on the asseverations of her dear child, was tenderly beloved by you, and in return preserved a reciprocal passion, till death put an end to her existence, — unfortunate, and ever to be regretted catastrophe for her amiable daughter! You would wish to know, very probably, how I, who am a perfect stranger, should be so well acquainted with a circumstance which is so nearly connected with your family affairs. I will, before I proceed any further with expostulation, inform you, that after your daughter found an opportunity of facilitating her escape from confinement, she travelled across the country, apprehensive that

you would, with the connivance of a worthless woman, force her back, and persist in your determination of rendering her truly wretched, with the only person that her soul was capable of despising; however, in the space of a fortnight, she arrived in town, and hearing, by accident, that I wanted a young woman to attend upon my person, offered herself as a candidate for the service, which was accepted of by me. She had resided with me for some time in this menial capacity, though not without my remarking several times the langour that overspread her lovely countenance. While I was dressing one day, I took the liberty of desiring her history, as I was confident, from her birth, she had never been designed for a servant. It is impossible for words to express half the agitation and anxiety Miss Harriot appeared to labour under upon this declaration of mine; however, upon my assuring her that if she would condescend to confide in my friendship, I would evince that I had a soul capable of preserving her secret inviolable from every ear, till herself should think proper to divulge it. But I can assure you, though I tried every method it was possible for sincere friendship to suggest, I found a
more

more difficult task in bringing her mind to agree, with relating her history, than any one would imagine. However, by dint of repeated interrogatories, and professions of unalterable and never ending friendship on my side, I at last drew the sacred secret, which, I am confident, had been till that moment preserved as such in the inmost recess of her soul. But, Oh heavens, with what exquisite ecstasy did this amiable girl dwell on your parental tenderness towards her, when in juvenile years, and with what unaffected sorrow did she lament her ever giving you cause to treat her otherwise in a maturer age. But when her discourse was arrived at that period where your severity obliged the dear girl to quit your house, in hopes of meeting with that protection from a stranger which affection could no longer claim from you, what a tender veil did she draw at that instant, saying, that her father was not susceptible of behaving otherwise than became a tender parent, but that it was the undutiful Harriot, as she called herself, that had rendered the tenderest of parents, and best of men wretched. In the course of conversation, Miss Harriot had mentioned the nobleman who was her lover, but would by no

means divulge his Lordship's name: yet though she proceeded with such precaution in regard to the names of every one who she had occasion to mention, I soon found the nobleman's name was Rake. As he happened to be very intimate at our house, I found an opportunity of bringing them in company with each other, and in a short time after the gentleman thought proper to solicit the lady's hand in marriage, which I, as a sincere friend, urged her to accept; and my father, the Earl of Hockinstone, had the honor of rendering their bliss complete, by personating you at the altar; and I am perfectly convinced that this amiable couple would not have a wish ungratified, when a reconciliation with you has taken place. And that you may find no excuse, my father and brother join with me in soliciting the favor of your residing with us in Berkley Square upon your arrival in town. Till then believe me, Sir, to be your's and family's sincere friend,

CAROLINE RIVERS.

P. S. Lady Rake has wrote this post, to entreat your forgiveness, which I hope is already granted.

L E T-

LETTER THE FIFTH.

LADY LOUISA BEAUMONT TO LADY
CAROLINE RIVERS.

Goodwill-Hall.

YOUR Ladyship has told me in a former letter that you had acquired the true art of court complaisance ; I sincerely believe every syllable you wrote to be true, as I have since received demonstration of your proceedings, sufficient to convince me of the reality of your asseverations, and you might have added, that you was as well instructed in the science of court interest, which has been generally remarked some years past for being self-interested. I had till now imagined that your boasting was mere hyperbole, or the effects of a lively vivacity ; but I find, to the shame of my former sincere friend, that it is no

fiction, but a fact in reality.—O, Caroline! for heaven's sake, never give way to any kind of deception, however innocent it may appear; for you may be assured it will steal into your mind by degrees, till at length you will not know when you put one of a more serious kind into execution; but, however, I will give you sufficient time to find an excuse for your first transgression of this nature (if you can find one I mean though) for writing your friend word, that it was her, and her alone, that should receive the thanks of Lord and Lady Rake. Oh, you cry, that was some time back; but I have made a hundred promises of that nature since, though without the least intention of performing any one of them. I sincerely believe you, and I may thank heaven for directing my mother to insist upon my residing a short time longer in the retirements of the country; for I am very confident that, had I been in town at this juncture, we should have experienced the effects of a severe misunderstanding, upon the account of your Ladyship taking the merit of Lord and Lady Rake's reconciliation to yourself. However, I care not who has the merit, for I am very happy to find that so amiable and truly
 deserving

deserving a Lady is so satisfactorily settled as you inform me she is; yet I am very apprehensive that you have a difficult point to gain in regard to her father, as I am rather dubious, though the gentleman might not receive his daughter's letter, whether the person who was the instigator of her ruin would not inform him of it, in hopes that herself might preserve the ascendancy in the family, which duplicity, glossed with pretended fidelity, had already gained her. If the case is thus, I very much doubt whether a reconciliation will ever take place between the parties, as you know it will not be to the interest of that mischievous woman, therefore she will use all her influence to prevent an eclaiircissement, and by that means add fuel to the flame, which might be (set aside her malicious interposition) entirely extinguished. However, would you take my advice, though it is rather absurd for me to give it to one who wishes to receive all the merit to herself, yet, as I have her Ladyship's future welfare at heart, I could wish, if you hear nothing from her father, that you would take a trip to his house, and put your eloquence to the full extent, by prevailing on him to esquire you to town, with a resolution

of residing in an amicable manner the remainder of his life with his daughter. So that if you can so far prevail over the old gentleman, whom my imagination suggests to be rather of a ferocious nature, I will unasked freely forgive, and, what is more, forget your late self-interested views.

As witness my hand,

LOUISA BEAUMONT.



LET-

LETTER THE SIXTH.

LADY CAROLINE RIVERS TO LADY
LOUISA BEAUMONT.

Berkley-square.

INDEED, my dear friend, I am very apprehensive that your conjectures are not without foundation in regard to the Hon. Mr. —, as it is now upwards of a week since I wrote, but have not received any answer; and, what is more singular, my father, who wrote a note of invitation at the same time, has received no intimation whatever whether the gentleman chuses to accept or decline his solicitous invitation, which I think favors rather of impoliteness on his side; for if he did not chuse to return a favorable answer to my epistle, yet common sense would dictate a few lines was requisite. Sure he could not imagine that a thorough neglect of both

B 5

my

my father and self was consistent with true politeness, if so he is very far from the mark of good breeding. But, in short, Lady Rake seems to apprehend that his soul has already reached the mansion of the blessed; however, if I do not receive some kind of satisfactory answer shortly, I have determined to take your advice relating to the journey. Good heaven! what a most shocking circumstance it will be, how wretchedly unhappy must Lady Rake's hours of reflection appear, what melancholy sensations will her reason have to combat with! — Oh, gracious heaven! my soul shudders at the idea of the many unaccountable and unmerited woes this dear woman has experienced; and should her apprehensions remain no longer a doubt, but on my return confirmed by certainty, I shall be alarmed, alarmed beyond conception for her reason; as I think she will scarce preserve fortitude sufficient to stand the attack of such a severe trial as the death of her father, before any one had been able to obtain his forgiveness for her. I have heard it remarked more than once, that those people who are born unfortunately under the influence of an unluckily star, must endure misfortune peculiar to themselves alone, though their sphere

sphere in life is unexceptionable; yet I am in great hopes this is not the case with Lady Rake, who has experienced sufficient anxiety of mind; but that her future life may be crowned with peace and blessed with tranquillity, is my ardent prayer. And as this is rather a melancholy subject I shall wave it for the present, to inform you that my cousin Harriot, whom I have not mentioned for so long a time, is just returned from the court of Versailles, where she has been introduced to their Majesties of that nation; and I am of opinion that the cash which has been expended, previous to her introduction at the French court, has not been expended in vain, as the young lady is very much improved in her carriage and behaviour; in short, she has left most of her odious affectation at Versailles, and, in lieu of that, has evinced she thought it more commendable to bring over a young and accomplished gentleman to England, with whom she intends to unite herself and fortune, should nothing intervene to prevent it. But seriously, I must do my cousin the justice to acknowledge that I do not know a more agreeable person (considering her former preposterous behaviour) than she is since her return. I should rather

ther imagine Miss Robinson had been drinking deep of the river Lethe, than that the French ladies natural *gaiete de cœur* could have wrought such a transformation; nay I could scarce credit my sight, such was my astonishment the first time I was in company with her after her return; she displayed such an agreeable vivacity in every syllable she uttered, that I was speechless with amaze. And, to convince you that what I now write is not apocryphal, I will give you indubitable proofs of her former weakness; for instance, if Miss Robinson attempted to converse with any one, they in return laughed in her face, and would speak to the person on the other hand; and if any lady wished to pay the least attention to her discourse, a gentleman would make his appearance before them and endeavour to divert her attention, by acquainting her that it was trifling away time to listen to the discourse of a person who could permit affectation to gain the ascendancy over her reason, so far as to deprive her of every other sensation. But that scene is now entirely changed; for should Miss Robinson make a motion to speak every tongue is silent, in hopes no doubt of edifying by the discourse of the lady whom they, a short
time

time only elapsed, totally despised. What a contrariety of different forms does the human mind assume in so short a time!— You will imagine, by my moralizing stile, that my sycophant admirers, as you said in a former letter, had all flown, and left the poor, unthinking, silly bird to bemoan her hard fate alone — But indeed, my dear, I would not wish you to imagine any such foolish idea, for I solemnly aver that I receive the adoration of every one with whom I have the honor to be in company, more at this present time than I have ever done yet. But here I must conclude, as my father has sent for me in haste, and insists upon my immediate attendance, therefore believe me to be unalterably,

Your sincere friend

CAROLINE RIVERS.

LET-

LETTER THE SEVENTH.

LADY CAROLINE RIVERS TO LADY
LOUISA BEAUMONT.

Berkley-square.

CONGRATULATE with me, my dear Louisa, the amiable and happy Lady, whose father has been arrived these two days. Oh Louisa! who could injure that revered character in the idea of his having a ferocious nature? No, it is very far from his disposition; he is all gentleness, meekness, humanity, and condescension: Such is his benign aspect, that it commands respect, from every one who has the honour to hold a conversation with him; But where is my transported imagination hurrying me too? I will try to calm my spirits, while I write a concise account, and acquaint you with the reason of the
Hon.

Hon. Gentleman's neglecting to write.— He informed us, that when he found his daughter had eloped, his passion overcame every other sensation, and he was determined to find her. In consequence of this resolution, he dispatched messengers to every inn on the road, to the metropolis, &c. &c. in order to stop her flight, as he apprehended that was the way Harriot would take. But when he found his designs frustrated in this respect, by the innkeepers, one and all, declaring that no such Lady, by the description, had been there, he began to reflect on the barbarous treatment she had received from the hands of him who ought to have been her sole protector; then, and not till then did guilt fly in his face, and he was conscious that it was his own conduct had occasioned his daughter's disobedience, and instantly dis-earded the vile author of his family's unhappiness. The next step that Mr. Fitzhugh took, (that being the Hon. Gentleman's name) was to offer a reward to any one who could give any information where the Lady could be heard of, as he wished to evince by his future tenderness how dear she was to him. But here his good intentions succeeded no better than
those

those he had formerly made, as no one could give him any intelligence whatever; till, at last, his patience being entirely exhausted, by repeated efforts to recover his long lost daughter, he fell a prey to melancholy, so far that it was impossible for any body to make him utter a single sentence, or answer any question they put to him, unless it related to his dear Harriot, as he ever after stiled her. Things continued in this situation, the neighbouring gentlemen were constantly urging, by letters, their friends in this metropolis to make enquiries concerning her; but all in vain, as all their efforts proved abortive, and a fortnight had elapsed before my letter reached the country, so that by this time the Honourable Gentleman's disease had changed into a lethargy, which it was feared, every moment would put an end to his existence; but when my intelligence was read, nature, which before seemed quite exhausted, now appeared newly revived; and from a fit of melancholy, which lasted during so many tedious months, he was transported with a phrenzy, which a consultation of physicians were of opinion would terminate only with life.— However, a refreshing slumber came to his

his relief, and in two days he was permitted to walk in the garden; on the fourth he undertook the tedious journey. In the confusion, occasioned by my letter, the gentleman who superintended the Hon. Mr. Fitzhugh's family, had entirely forgot to return me an answer: The Hon. Gentleman was ignorant of the neglect, therefore, it must be confessed, he was not entitled to reproach. Upon his arrival in town, he wrote a polite note to the Earl, my father, requesting his permission to attend him, who returned an answer, that he would do himself the pleasure of attending the Hon. Gentleman in person, for the purpose of conducting him. My father ordered the carriage immediately, and arrived at the inn before the servant could return the message. I was not apprized of this, being just returned from condoling Lady Rake, who was gone to reside at my Lord's, whose house was now finished; when my father entered the room, attended by her Ladyship's father, to whom he introduced me, but forebore calling him by his name. This trivial circumstance I considered rather singular, till my father asked me when I had seen Lady Rake?—When this Question was put to me, I observed

served the stranger to look pale; it was then I began to suspect that he was her Ladyship's father, neither did I hesitate to call him Mr. Fitzhugh. When my father understood I had discovered the secret he desired I would send my servant for Lady Rake, which I joyfully assented to, and received her in another room, as I wished her to be prepared upon the occasion. Soon after her entrance, I informed her my father had heard from hers, and that he intended giving us the honour of a visit to-morrow. Gracious Heaven! exclaimed she, is it possible? But will my father forgive me? Oh Lady Caroline! don't flatter me in the idea, for the love of Heaven. I assured her he was impatient to fold her in his arms. Then my felicity is complete indeed, returned this amiable creature. I asked her if her father should come, whether the sight of him would not overpower her spirits? She replied in the negative. Well then, returned I, we expect him every minute. Heavens be praised said she, in a transport, let us go in search of the Earl, said I, at the same time taking her hand to lead her where both our fathers were. But let Shakespeare's pen describe! or Reynolds's pencil draw their mutual astonishment!

ment! for indeed it would be an impracticable attempt for me. At sight of each other, both father and daughter were riveted to the spot where they stood! Lady Rake was the first that broke silence, and, throwing herself at his feet, cried, Forgive me, Oh my father; I abhor myself for my disobedience to you; yet, while on my knees, I humbly beg your forgiveness; despise not these tears of humble and deep contrition. My hardened heart resisted a compliance with your commands, yet, let the distress I have since experienced plead in my behalf; with what unfeigned sorrow, and sincere repentance, I view my past folly. Rise, my child, cry'd her father, affectionately embracing her as he raised her to his arms, it is not for you, who have never wilfully offended, to solicit forgiveness:—No, it is I that should ask forgiveness, in compelling you to fly from my house and protection. Oh don't think of soliciting pardon from your child, whom you have never injured, returned her Ladyship.—And do you still retain that amiable disposition, my child, for which you was always remarked. But now my tranquillity is completely restored; and, Heaven be praised! it is my Harriot who has poured
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the balm of comfort into her father's wound. Yet, joy, excess of joy, has weakened all my nerves, and I am scarce capable to support the conflict that my breast labours under at this moment. You, my dear Louisa, who can so sincerely sympathise in every tender sensation of either pleasure or pain, that your friends experience, may easily comprehend our joy at the reconciliation of such a father and daughter. My father, even my father wept, Louisa, and after our tears were dried, we all accompanied her Ladyship and father to Cavendish-square, where a fresh scene of mingled joy and grief were exhibited to our view, and the honourable Mr. Fitzhugh presented his Lordship with thirty thousand pounds, as a marriage *dowry* with his daughter. In the evening her ladyship sent for two experienced physicians, to consult on her father's health, and they advise him to go to France, for a perfect re-establishment of his former constitution. Lady Rake has insisted upon my accompanying them, as my Lord and herself has determined, that for the future, not any consideration whatsoever, shall divide them from her father. And as I shall have an opportunity of seeing the French nation,

in

in company with those my father has contracted a sincere regard for, he has, tho' very reluctantly, assented to my journey. We are now preparing for our departure, therefore I shall not write again till we reach Dover.

Believe me, I remain

Yours, affectionately,

CAROLINE RIVERS.



L E T.

LETTER THE EIGHTH.

LADY CAROLINE RIVERS.

(In continuation.)

Dover.

AFTER A very pleasant journey, we are just arrived at Dover, from whence I promised to write ; but I am so elevated at the idea of the conquests I expect to obtain over the male sex, and the envy I shall occasion in the breasts of the females belonging to this polite nation, that I can neither talk nor think of any thing else ; therefore you must not expect me to write otherways than imagination dictates to me. But I really think, that in our tour through the French nation, I shall find an opportunity to ensnare the heart of some foreign nobleman, who will think it is doing himself an honour in conducting me to England, with
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an intent of offering his heart, hand, person and fortune for my acceptance, which, should I refuse, as in all probability I may, if my heart is froze, as it has been on similar occasions, the poor soul, not capable of surviving a denial from the object of his adoration, takes its flight, never more to return. The news of this unfortunate lover's melancholy death, is instantly sent express to France; this is talked of in every hotel, that the Marquis De ———, not brooking the haughty carriage a certain young Lady of quality showed towards him, had departed this life, Anno Dom. as he was unable to support it without the Lady of his choice. Well, just out of curiosity, (as they will tell their friends) comes half a hundred gallant young sparks to view this cruel fair, who is so justly stiled the mirror of beauty: Nay, I make no doubt but some among them will set out with a determined resolution of vanquishing, if possible, the obdurate heart of this proud insensible, and then quit her, in revenge for the injury done by her to their countryman. Poor souls! Well, out of compassion to their friends, who may be anxious for the safety of these unthinking youth's hearts, and kindly wishing their safe return, I think I must scan their folly
with

with a partial eye, and, dismissing them, unhurt, permit their return to their native country, where a caution will not be unnecessary, to the more infatuated part of their sex, (I mean those who are infatuated with my imaginary beauty,) not to be too courageous in the pursuit of Lady Caroline; as it will only tend to render their future life miserable, her Ladyship having resolved to wed no one, however amiable he may appear, unless one of her own countrymen. But here is a letter arrived, express, from my brother! What can be the sudden occasion of this? My woman tells me the carriage is come also! But let me peruse my letter; Oh gracious Heaven! my father! What can this mean? My father dangerously ill!—Oh that I had not left him; wishes to see me, my bother says. Oh, my Louisa, pity your wretched friend, who has just received the news of accumulated misfortunes. I have been questioning the servants, who inform me the Earl's recovery was so doubtful, when they left town, that the physicians were of opinion, the sooner I arrived in town, the better opportunity I should have to receive his blessing. Ah why did I ever leave that tender, affectionate parent, to roam in search of those who will flatter my vanity
at

at the expence of their own folly. Indeed, my dear Louisa, I now see my capricious disposition in a true light, and am determined not to indulge it in the like ridiculous stile again; therefore forgive the lively sallies at the beginning of this. I have time for no more; the carriage waits, and I fly on the wings of duty, love, and affection.

P. S. I shall write on my arrival in town.



LETTER THE NINTH.

LADY CAROLINE RIVERS TO LADY
LOUISA BEAUMONT.

Berkley-square.

GOD be praised, my father's disorder is no longer doubtful, Louisa. I found him surprisingly recovered on my arrival, and he is now permitted to go out of his room. The physicians have desired him to retire from company, and be kept calm and serene in the country. My brother and self intend to accompany him, therefore I shall receive the greater satisfaction, as it will afford me an opportunity of seeing my dear Louisa much earlier than I expected, the enjoyment of whose company
and

and conversation will sufficiently compensate the disappointment of my intended journey. And believe me when I inform you, that I find my mind much more at ease now, in preparing for a few months of peaceful serenity than it was when ready to embark for a foreign nation, whose court is filled with deception, intrigues, and dissipation. It is true my mind was elevated at the time beyond imagination, at the idea of the admiration I should excite in the breasts of some of the polite Frenchmen; but I confess I did not give myself the trouble of thinking of the arts practised by most foreigners. Yet, the Almighty be praised, who has taught me to experience what sincere grief is, by afflicting my dear father with a painful illness. Certainly I have shared, as I then thought sincerely, in the distresses that my friend has been obliged to endure; but when I came to bear the heavy weight on my own mind, how different were the sensations I then experienced. When you share the distresses of a friend, it is momentary in a manner, when compared with your own, because it is not yourself that has to struggle in the dangerous labyrinth of trouble; therefore it is impos-

sible for any one to feel the oppression so heavy as the identical person at whom it is aimed, very often with an intent to destroy. An indifferent person may sympathize with those who are overwhelmed with misfortunes; but when they experience any thing of the kind themselves, they will instantly exclaim against the Supreme Being; and should the friend who had felt the weight of affliction pretend to reason with them, they will instantly answer, Ah, my misfortunes are of a peculiar kind, your's were but a mere nothing, when set in competition with mine. Thus every human being thinks his own distress the greatest, therefore it is impossible for the generality of mankind to experience that sincere sorrow for a friend's distress as they must for their own. Perhaps there may be one or two who will share a friend's misfortune as their own, nay, will relieve and alleviate their distress at the expence of their own fortune. Yet I am very apprehensive that there are but few of such a heavenly disposition, as they now a days, generally consider this is not the golden age; and very probably those who have a heart to assist such as are in distressed circumstances, may not be empowered

empovered by the gift of Fortune, that blind goddess, who too often lavishes her favours on those who are not worthy to obtain them. Thus, villany triumphs in a gilt carriage, while honest indigence is obliged to endure, without repining, the contempt and disdain that a proud upstart chuses to honor them with. I make no kind of doubt but you will be astonished upon the receipt of this letter, as you have not had such a moralizing one from me since my residence in the metropolis, neither would you have received this now, had not my father's late indisposition procured me—pho,—I cannot make the pen do its office without blotting: I believe it is a word my stubborn heart don't approve — gravity ——— It is done at last, but in short I am so reformed, as your Ladyship chuses to term it, that not one of my obsequious admirers would know me, as they all affirm, if it was not for my angelic form and heavenly countenance; it absolutely then would be an impossibility for you or any one to divine, unless you were continually present, how these poor creatures exhaust themselves in fruitless endeavours to entertain me; and my brother is not without his apprehensions

that I shall have a very severe fit of illness to encounter. However, I hope, with the assistance of the Almighty, and the agreeable conversation of my amiable friend, that I shall again recover my former vivacity, as the present dejection of spirits proceeds from the concern my mind laboured under while on my journey home, being apprehensive of the worst consequences attending my father's indisposition. But as the cause is so happily removed, I hope time will enable me to overcome the dejection which is so painful at present, without any further symptoms of an encreasing disease. As I am still in great expectation of an union between your Ladyship and Lord Rivers, I must solicit as a favour, that you will prepare (if not already prepared) your heart for the reception, attack, and surrender of that and your person upon his Lordship's arrival, as it will be a moral impossibility for any lady to pretend an attachment to another gentleman, when they have conversed with this amiable pattern of his sex. I make no doubt but you will conclude it is mere hyperbole, when I inform you, that should you and my brother entertain sufficient affection for each other to conclude

clude a match, I scarce know whether we shall not hear of the death of several celebrated beauties, who are so enraptured with his Lordship, that they can scarce return a civil answer to any gentleman, who professes an ardent and sincere passion for them. I cannot contain the sentiments in my breast here upon the capricious dispositions of human beings in general. I will begin first with those ladies who receive with contempt a sincere lover, while themselves are in a similar situation with their admirers, only with this difference, they are sensible of the power they retain over their faithful slaves. Whereas my brother is perfectly ignorant of his own charms, or at least is not such a fop as to imagine every female who receives him with more than common civility, must be enraptured with his person. And I sincerely believe, that was one of his own sex to affirm for a certainty, that such a lady was languishing for his Lordship, he is of such a humane disposition, that he would imagine himself exceedingly wanting, in point of honor, did he not defend the injured lady's character at the expence of his own blood; in short, I have been repeatedly told by ladies of the

elder kind, that Lord Rivers was formed in the days of humanity and condescension, but was reserved till this period, as an example to mankind in general. Now don't you think, Louisa, it is very agreeable to hear one's relations extolled to the skies for affability and condescension to their inferiors; courtesy and a becoming pride to their superiors; politeness, and a requisite familiarity upon occasion to all mankind. But it is very seldom he invites familiarity to his aid, yet has a certain *je ne sçai quoy* in his whole deportment that involuntary draws reverence from his inferiors, and admiration, with a love of his virtues, from those who are superior in point of rank or fortune. There are those of quite a different stamp to his Lordship, who, upon the most trivial circumstance, if it is but a nod of approbation from one of the opposite sex, fancy the lady is desperately in love with their all-conquering charms, and will instantly set the whole sex at defiance, as they vainly and ridiculously imagine their own persons have such numberless transcendent accomplishments, far above any the female can possibly boast. I could, if I chose, say much on this subject, but will
at

at present content myself with this hint to
those humble admirers (Narcissus like) of
their own persons, while I conclude my-
self your faithful friend,

CAROLINE RIVERS.



LETTER THE TENTH.

LADY CAROLINE RIVERS TO
LADY RAKE.

Hockinstone Hall.

YOUR Ladyship may conceive by this we are already arrived at the family mansion, where we purpose to reside the remaining part of the summer season, should not any material circumstance intervene to frustrate our intentions. And now, my dear friend, I can with truth assure you, I find my constitution much better within these few days. I have enjoyed in the country more happiness than all the hurry and bustle of court, pomp, magnificence, and splendor could possibly afford. My residence in town was a continual round of pleasure; my ideas were confused; my
mind

mind was filled with ridiculous imaginations; my leisure moments (hours I had none to call my own) were diverted with consulting what kind of dress would make me appear more charming than the rest of my sex at the next ensuing ball or masquerade I might make my appearance at, and the only excuse I have to plead for my blind folly was, being a young creature just entering into fashionable life, and who did not at the time reflect on the preposterous absurdity of her behaviour. At present all is changed; my mind is quite placid, and I in reality enjoy what may with sincerity be termed a country life. You, my dear Lady Rake, will, I am confident peruse this epistle with every pleasing emotion sacred to the purest emanations of friendship; therefore attend, whilst I permit my pen to explain the insatiable pleasure of a rural life, such as my brother, Lady Louisa, and myself, at present enjoy. At six in the morning we repair to a most beautiful spot, which is immured in the almost impenetrable recesses of a craggy rock, shadowed with surrounding woods, which appear to the most penetrating or criticising eye combined with every rustic elegance the most fertile imaginations can form, or refined ideas would

desire. So habitual are the shades in this short space become, with the agreeable addition of my amiable Louisa's enlivening conversation, that the most superb scenes of elegance or fashionable extravagance that art or magnificence can adorn, would receive at present no kind of adoration from your newly contemplative friend. Your Ladyship will be rather surprised, that my former behaviour should be so inconsistent with my present stile of writing; but your astonishment will cease, when I inform you it is to my Louisa I am indebted for my present system of decorum, whose fascinating counsels steal almost imperceptibly on my mind; and even there, before I am aware of it, I find it is written on golden tablets on my heart, that happiness does not consist in superficial adornments; nor can pomp, with its companion, wealth, and its attendant, luxury, demand its stay. No, it is attached to no peculiar rank or station; but should a partiality be discovered to vibrate, and the recesses of it examined into, I am of opinion it would be proved to extend towards the vale of penury, rather than the stately palace, or a monarch's throne. Since my retreat from the noisy metropolis to our peaceful mansion, I must
confess,

confess, that pleasing and tranquil sensations, intermingled with an uninterrupted serenity, have taken entire possession of my whole frame; and to finish this alluring prospect, the late change in my sentiments perfectly coincide with the enchanting situation, and insensibly acquire the enthusiasm it occasions. But though we unsatisfied mortals are continually making repeated efforts to retain, as we imagine, real happiness, yet too often have we resigned a substantial good for an imaginary one, which, when the blind pursuer too late discovers, he is racked with the most excruciating pangs. It is thus with me, who, if there is such a thing as real happiness, I perfectly enjoy it; yet the pleasing idea of soon beholding my dear Harriot, (permit me the freedom of a friend, and pardon the liberty of an entire rustic) makes me sigh very often to be in a foreign court, that I might enjoy the agreeable conversation of my amiable and affectionate friend. At other times I lament the necessity for your so much regretted absence, and sincerely offer up my prayers to the Supreme Power incessantly, that the cause of your tedious absence may by this time be entirely removed, and my Harriot preparing for a return to her

her native country, and longing arms of her Caroline, which will be ever ready to receive her. Oh, could you but partake with Louisa, myself, and brother, those innocent and delightful pleasures, your presence would add fresh animation to the distant retrospection, and render this rural prospect a paradise in reality. But perhaps while I am totally absorbed in the illusive and pleasing sensation that has taken entire possession of my whole soul, so as to banish every disagreeable thought, or painful idea that might occur, you are preparing for the splendid drawing-room, where reign little else in the minds of those present, but secret envyings and constant disquietudes. Can such unthankful dispositions, under the brilliant robe of magnificence, or alluring pomp of equipage, can they, I repeat, sufficiently compensate my Harriot for the company of her contemplative friend? But probably, while I am writing, you are forming an imaginary friendship with some unfaithful female of a foreign nation; and implicitly relying on her friendship, have formed a determination of resigning that of your faithful Caroline. Yet base ingratitude and vain alarms, desist, nor strive to render me injurious to my generous

rous friend through the channel of base born suspicion ; and therefore as I am apprehensive my friend will trace some remains of a discontented disposition, I will conclude this, to a fashionable lady, insipid epistle, with fresh assurances of my friendship continuing as affectionate as ever.

CAROLINE RIVERS.

LFT.

LETTER THE ELEVENTH

LADY RAKE TO LADY CAROLINE
RIVERS.

Paris.

“PERMIT me the liberty of a friend!”
—What a coolness those few syllables alone sufficiently express; as if your intentions were to entirely abandon your till lately deserted and forlorn Harriot, since you and Lady Louisa are again met in the shades of rural contemplation, and the peaceful mansions of real happiness: but you may rely on my asseverations, Lady Caroline, when I inform you that I cannot imagine there is such a thing as real happiness, because it does not consist in a person’s situation in life; for those whose circumstances afford them every luxury that dissipation or extravagance can possibly present to view, which you from oc-
cular

cular demonstration will allow are not a few, in this age of tumultuous parade and idle show, have constantly some vain and illusive alarms to torment fatigued imagination, so far as to prevent happiness from finding a quiet sanctuary in their breast; therefore happiness is not to be met with in the habitation of those who possess power, wealth, or honour. I will not mention Monarchs, as affairs of state and the nation absolutely exclude them from the command or possession of it; but will take a survey of those who enjoy a genteel competency in life; they are striving to augment the fortune providence has allotted them during their existence in life, that their predecessors may reap a superior benefit in the mortgage in a future age of degeneracy; but should one of the family be settled to a disadvantage in life, the parents, by this unforeseen accident, render their future days a scene of murmuring and wretchedness — this therefore cannot be stiled happiness — Now let us descend to the examination of the vale familiar to numbers, commonly called penury, where so many meritorious objects are perpetually exhibited to view, with their constant companions famine, want, and misery — ghastly spectres!

tres! ready to prepare for their eternal
 destruction. Is this, my dear Lady Ca-
 roline, the vale you have mentioned to
 be the only residence of happiness? you
 cannot surely, after a moment's deliberate
 reflection on the situation of those wretch-
 ed beings, conclude this to be the seat of
 Contentment's triumphal standard. These
 distressed objects of humane compassion
 are incessantly petitioning the all-merciful
 Creator for riches, as the only retribution
 for past accumulated misfortunes, and, in
 short, the only requisition that can possi-
 bly render their felicity compleat; be-
 cause their conceptions are limited within
 the mercenary compass of riches, and the
 ideas they entertain of grandeur, will not
 permit them to soar above the wing of
 imaginary splendor; it is imagination
 which pourtrays, in fancy's vivid rays,
 scenes that charm, that fascinate the mind,
 continually alive to pleasure's alluring at-
 tractions. Some of those, by the death
 of friends, and the illuminated rays of for-
 tunes (though but seldom) benignity may
 arrive at the summit of the all-potent de-
 luding phantom; when that is acquired,
 and they find themselves in full possession
 of all her gifts, fancy withdraws her pleas-
 ing form, and in the sensual enjoyment
 of

of riches, effulgent charms pall, disgust, and, lastly, evaporate as the fantastic and alluring visions of happiness it had formed. You, my dear Lady Caroline, who are, as your imagination misrepresents, so familiar with real happiness, intermingled with a delightful prospect of rural contemplation, are not contented; otherwise, why should you permit illusive apprehensions to find a harbour in your generous breast, respecting my want of gratitude in entertaining the most distant idea of renouncing your well experienced friendship. No, I should imagine there never was a being permitted to exist on earth would be guilty of such base ungrateful behaviour, towards one to whom they were obligated in the peculiar manner I am to you. — Oh, my dear Lady Caroline! the condescension of your amiable disposition will never be effaced from my memory till death, that fatal destroyer of every earthly inhabitant, plucks the fleeting fabric of life from this weakly frame; and then, even then, I will bear the record of your humanity, in snatching me from the devouring hand of wretchedness, which entirely overwhelmed me at that time. — But, lest my friend should accuse me of flattery, I will quit
this

this pleasing subject, and leave my justification of sincerity to this foreign court, which, I am confident, from my repeated asseverations in your behalf, will vindicate your character, should any abandoned profligate have the presumption to asperse it. And now, my dear Lady Caroline, while you imagine my ideas are entirely diverted with the splendor of court magnificence, I am sighing in secret for a return to my native country, which pleasing contemplation will not, I am apprehensive, be accomplished so early as I could wish, as my father's disorder continues rather doubtful still; therefore, unless my kind Lady Caroline will favour us with her engaging company, I know not when I shall receive the satisfactory happiness of again seeing the only friend I dare confide in. We see very little company; for how is it possible for a mind ill at unison with itself, (as mine is at present, on account of my dear father's indisposition) to impart the benign infusion to their guests as I have ever experienced? It is an impossibility for me to put on the mask of complaisance, when my sensations are racked with excruciating pangs; and those who would visit us, their imaginations are confined to pleasure's potent allurements, because their
 appre-

apprehensions may not be fixed on a dear father, for whose welfare they are anxious. and how strange must it appear to them, who are not acquainted with anxiety's pernicious labyrinth, for the person's countenance, who alone ought to make them welcome, to be overspread with melancholy languor which no mirth can efface; therefore what few visitors we receive are intimates of my Lord's. No glaring parade, or ostentatious equipage, presides in our family, but instead of those we have established neatness, prudence, and œconomy, three very requisite articles to form an harmonious family were our minds at ease. In the conclusion of your last you wrote there was a hint that I should receive it as insipid; but it is with the utmost sincerity I assure you, that I never read a letter which gave me more exquisite pleasure, because it perfectly coincided with the sentiments of my mind, which were very much dejected at the time it arrived. And now, my dear Lady Caroline, I must conclude this, which evidently evinces my present unhappy state of mind, with fresh renewals of my affectionate attachment continuing as unshaken as when your assiduous humanity reconciled the forlorn Harriot to her Lord
and

and father, who join with me in perpetual prayers for your's and family's happiness. Believe me to be, unalterably,

Your's,

HARRIOT RAKE.

LET.

LETTER THE TWELFTH.

LADY CAROLINE RIVERS TO
LADY RAKE.

Berkley-square.

YOUR Ladyship will be surpris'd to hear of my sudden return to town, after the sententious description I sent you of a contemplative life; but state affairs required my father's presence, who is perfectly recovered, and his Lordship was determin'd I should accompany him, as my brother appear'd inclinable to enjoy the fascinating pleasure of rural amusements, during the autumn season, (as he pretends). But I, who your Ladyship has experienced have a competent share of penetration, can easily discern that is not my brother's sole motive for continuing at Hockinstone-hall. I am very much deceived in the extent of
my

my judgment, if a reciprocal attachment does not subsist between my brother and Lady Louisa Beaumont; and, far from disapproving it, both my father and self are determined to bring it to a union of the families, if we find it practicable; for should our endeavours succeed, my brother can not fail receiving complete felicity, in the connubial state; as Lady Louisa's disposition is of such an exquisite composition, that I am confident her Ladyship would not, voluntarily, offend the person who was destined for her lord and master. She is formed to attract the partiality of every human being; and I am thoroughly convinced your Ladyship would be charmed with the native simplicity, and unaffected purity, which guide her principles and behaviour, could you have the satisfaction of conversing with this enchanting example of her sex, who has no foibles, like many other females, that require a veil; no capricious disposition to disguise with alluring smiles when in company; nor does a sentiment escape her lips, when in conversation, but would do honour to a monarch. In short, such a female as her Ladyship is not to be met with in every family I frequent; nor but few noblemen who have not some vice inherent in their nature; in
which

which few, my brother is to be included ; therefore, those two, who are devoid of every art practised by the generality of mankind, are the most proper for each other. But I am interrupted by a letter ! Bless me, it is a copy of verses, humbly dedicated to Lady Caroline Rivers, for her care and perusal ; in praise of whose transcendant beauty, Colonel M^rFarson has again besought the nine muses to lend their aid. What a romantic being this is ! So, to divert your Ladyship's melancholy moments, I will here pen it down.

Apollo, great director of the nine,
 Inspire my lays with thy celestial fire ;
 Teach me to sing, with melody divine,
 The praise of her whom angels must admire.
 She far excels, in beauty, all that's rare ;
 Of every bright accomplishment possess'd :
 Make her, kind Gods, your most peculiar care,
 And may her soul feel comfort, joy and rest.
 Her artless mind's adorn'd with every grace,
 Her cheek may with the rose and lilly vie,
 Her heart the enchanting emblem of her face,
 And sprightly health sits sparkling in her eye.
 Grant me, ye powers, with her to pass my wife,
 Should death o'ertake her, quickly seal my doom,
 And if I lose my love, my joy, my wife,
 Take us together to the silent tomb.

Ah ! this is all insipid. Had it been
 some months ago, you, my dear Lady
 VOL. II. D Rake,

Rake, must be confident, from ocular demonstration on similar occasions, how I should have triumphed in this nauseous eloquence; but that little Louisa, whose discourse is witchcraft itself, has persuaded me out of all those idle conceptions I formerly entertained, and, in lieu of them, has taught me to establish prudence and sincerity, two qualifications far more becoming, because, forsooth, the fascinating flatterer told her pupil, those were foils to set off a lady's beauty, while they guard her from insults, ridicule and contempt.— In short, since I have had an opportunity to reflect, I am often ashamed of the ridiculous appearance I have made, from an ostentatious desire of receiving praise, not my due, from a set of obsequious admirers, or rather sycophants, as Lady Louisa terms them, who choose to advance a hundred falsehoods, to shew their wit, rather than tell a Lady the plain sentiments of their mind, which would, was it examined into, abominate the female who evinced affectation, and a love of praise, to be her only darling pleasures. But the anxiety you express for your father alarms me beyond conception: I know by experience, my dear Harriot, what the mind but too sensibly alive to affliction's scourging

ing rod, endures ; yet, I hope, with the assistance of divine benediction, he will recover ; and though he should not, let me intreat of you, my dear Lady Rake, not to give a loose to dire despair. Consider, your Lord would have a double weight of affliction to contend with. Reflect, my dear Harriot, on the indispensable duty you owe his Lordship, as your husband, set aside every other affectionate tie which endears him to you ; revolve in your own mind, what a melancholy situation your Lord must endure, when he finds your father past recovery, and yourself likewise. But I am in great hopes there is no such danger nigh for many years ; but may your father live to a venerable age, to behold your children instructed in the paths of virtue, is the sincere prayers of your

Most affectionate

CAROLINE RIVERS.

LETTER THE THIRTEENTH.

THE EARL OF HOCKINSTONE TO
LORD RIVERS.

Berkley square.

OH, Charles! your dear sister! Ah Heavens! what will become of your wretched father? Perhaps, while I am writing, some bold ravisher is dragging my dear Caroline from the arms of an affectionate father for ever, and depriving you, my son, of an amiable sister, therefore delay not a moment, upon the receipt of this, to hasten home to assert an injured sister's right, who may be, even now, (I shudder at the idea) craving the assistance and protection of Heaven, since she can no longer claim the arm of her father or brother. Yet, I will strive to calm the perturbation which rages in my breast,

breast, for the honour of a daughter, who is dearer to me than life itself. I hear a rap at the door! I will inquire if it is any of the servants returned:—No, it was a false alarm, and therefore I must proceed. Your dear sister had been writing a letter this morning to Lady Rake, and sent her man with it to the post, while she went to walk in the park unattended. I was from home, and did not return till dinner was on table, when, to my great astonishment, the servants informed me your sister was out: Upon a further enquiry, I was told by her woman, that Caroline's intentions were to return in an hour. This intimation awoke suspicious doubts; and I sent the servants in search of her. But they returned, Oh gracious Heaven! returned without gaining any kind of intelligence! I went in pursuit of her myself, but all in vain. I rambled wherever my footsteps led, till chance brought me to the door of Sir Edward Clements. A thought occurred to my remembrance:—Sir Edward had sighed, though without success, for Caroline:—Sure he had not eloped with my child? Oh Charles! he is noble to a degree; for, the instant I had informed that generous man of our irretrievable loss, in the person of our Caro-

line—I am distracted with the thought—he declared, that though she had long since bereft him of all hope, yet he would not tamely endure the mortifying reflection of suffering a villainous usurper to triumph in her ruin, while his arm and fortune were at his own disposal; and, in the cause of injured innocence, he would exert them both to their utmost extent. Sir Edward has been with me this instant; that kind soul has solicited his Majesty to lay an embargo on all trading vessels in every port in the nation. My rage is up in arms, I can find time for no more.

Your affectionate father,

HOCKINSTON.



LET-

LETTER THE FOURTEENTH.

LORD RIVERS TO LADY LOUISA BEAUMONT.

Berkley-square;

I am just arrived, my dear Louisa, but can gain no intelligence of my dear sister, your amiable and affectionate friend.—— What will become of my dear parent?— Gracious Heaven! my soul recoils at the idea. Worn out with a vain and fruitless fatigue, he sinks under the weight of affliction's ponderous roof, which overwhelms his tender mind; but the villain who has dared to perpetrate this bold attempt, shall feel the full effects of my arm:—Pardon, my dear Lady Louisa, the sallies of my passion, which is roused in behalf of a defenceless sister; it has so put me off my

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guard

guard, that I scarce recollect to whom I am addressing these mournful lines. An embargo had been laid on every vessel, before my arrival, therefore don't suffer your grief to gain the ascendancy so far as to injure your health:—Suffer me to intreat you, both for my sake and my amiable sister's, who cannot, through the kind interposition of Sir Edward's assiduous vigilance, be carried out of the kingdom. Oh, my dear Lady Louisa, pardon the expression, but you have injured that disinterested friend, in the supposition of its being him who had acted the villainous and hypocritical scene. No, it cannot be, he is indefatigable in pursuit of the wretch who has dared to put this outrageous contrivance on our honor. My father has sent to the house of every gentleman whom he had observed pay any kind of assiduous attention to our dear unfortunate Caroline, to enquire if they are in town.—The servant is returned. Colonel M'Farson gone to France! Heavens! 'tis he! 'tis he is the villain! I will not conclude this till my return, when, should I meet with the desired success, your tears will cease their incessant spring.—Give me leave to congratulate you, my dear fair mourner, on the dawn of joy which now breaks forth to
reinstale

reinstate your drooping spirits, which are so sensibly alive to every misfortune your friends endure, and can share with them the boundaries of fortune's fickle favours. But my dear sister is returned—returned to gladden and cheer the hearts of all her sorrowing friends. When I set out this morning, with the intention of pursuing and overtaking my sister's ravisher, I met Sir Edward Clements, to whom I imparted my design. Actuated by the noblest principles, he determined to accompany me.—We set forward on our journey, and had travelled about thirty miles, when we perceived a post carriage coming towards us : Upon a nearer approach I recognized the arms to be those of the Earl of Hamwick, a nobleman I had a slight knowledge of in Italy.—We past it; when, judge my astonishment, ye whom anxious fears alarm for the safety of a sister's honour, to hear her well known voice issue from the carriage, in an exclamation of Oh Heavens! my brother! Sir Edward, come back.—We turned our horses, and beheld my dear sister, with her body half out of the carriage window, which was going very swift onwards, and, as we imagined, some one pulling her in. Rage, joy, and revenge, alternately took possession of my breast!

We had but two servants, and those but very poorly armed, as we had taken no thought that numbers might overpower us; but in the hurry of my spirits weakly concluded, that an innocent person, though unarmed, when roused by reason and honour, could vanquish multitudes. How illusive the idea! However, we rode up to the carriage, while Sir Edward stopped the horses belonging to it. In an instant we had the Earl's servants, who were all well armed, surrounding us, and ready to fire the moment the brave and gallant Earl commanded. But my sister put a stop to his orders being obeyed, by a second exclamation of Oh, save my brother, dear, generous protector! then, swooning, fell at his feet. The Earl desired his servants to open the door, and raising the almost breathless angel (for such she appeared at that moment) in his arms, applied an essence, which restored my Caroline to her speech, who called for her dear brother.— I had dismounted, and was standing at the door of the carriage. The instant she perceived me the dear girl jumped into my arms, which were open to receive her, crying, at the same time, Spare! Oh spare my compassionate deliverer! and then fainted again. When she recovered, the
Earl,

Earl, who had before given us to understand he was bringing her to town, to place her once more under the protection of her doating father, insisted that Sir Edward Clements and I would accept of seats in his carriage, on our return to town, which we did ; and the Earl informed us, that his father's death demanding his return to England much earlier than expected, he had arrived this morning at Dover, where he had to wait an hour for his equipage, and just as the servants were preparing for their Lord's departure, a Lady rushed into the room, and flinging herself on her knees, craved protection for a wretch who was destitute of every relief, if not instantly delivered by his Lordship's humanity. This strange address, from a person who appeared involved in such eminent danger, rather confused him, and he scarce knew what answer to return to a Lady whose apparent distress was occasioned by a disorder on the mind, as his Lordship imagined. But Caroline starting up, exclaimed, Ah Heavens ! I had forgot ! he knows me not ; and taking from her arm a bracelet, which was my resemblance, ran up to his Lordship, desiring him to recollect the features of Lord Rivers, to whom she was sister, but had been unjustly trepanned

by an infamous wretch from the arms of an indulgent parent, and an affectionate brother. Oh, Sir! she continued, spare me but this once from a detested abominable wretch, and I will never, no, never crave assistance again. Would you believe it?—The villain wants to delude me into marriage? In this romantic stile, my dear Lady Louisa, did your affectionate friend proceed, till the Earl assured her, upon his honour, himself would protect her from every insult till safe arrived at her father's house. At one time he determined to go in person to Colonel M'Farson, who was the wretch that ran off with Caroline. But she would not permit it, but entreated his Lordship to proceed to town that instant, adding, if you are not a second M'Farson, you will waft me through the air to a disconsolate parent. The Earl ordering his carriage to draw up, left a note, to be delivered to the Colonel after their departure; and when we rode past the carriage, my sister was acquainting that nobleman with the base artifice the villain practised to ensnare her into his coach. On a sudden she started, and, as the Earl at that time imagined, with an intention of precipitating herself from the carriage window, he caught hold of her to prevent it. My dear

dear sister will write our amiable friend a concise account of every circumstance which has occurred, therefore I will resign my pen for the present, with assuring Lady Louisa,

I remain her faithful admirer,

RIVERS.



LET-

LETTER THE FIFTEENTH.

LADY CAROLINE RIVERS TO LADY
LOUISA BEAUMONT.

Berkley Square.

OH, my dear Louisa, paint to your imagination the wretched scene your Caroline has been involved in, and obliged to endure, without repining, since divided from her better half. Think you see your unfortunate friend in the hands of an inexorable butcher, prepared to lead his credulous deluded victim to the altar, or by a single effort on her side to the contrary, plunge a dagger in her breast. Think, Oh, think on the mean arts your unprotected Caroline was obliged to put in practice, artifices my soul abhors to name, to escape the vigilance of an abandoned profligate, who had meditated

tated her eternal destruction, by an union as nauseous in itself, as abominably vile in the execution. I had sent my man on an errand, and went without any attendant in the Park myself, when I was accosted by Colonel M'Farson. After the usual salutations had past, we took a turn in the Mall, and the Colonel expressed his astonishment at my walking the Park unattended, artfully repeating, Heavens, Lady Caroline, such an exquisite charmer as you to walk here unprotected ! Why, I should not be surpris'd to hear that a gallant young spark had eloped with your Ladyship. There can be no apprehension, I returned, while a brave Colonel is by to deliver me. He returned his humble acknowledgments for my partiality in his favor, and sincerely hoped he might never be guilty of an action which would oblige me to forfeit the high opinion I entertain'd of his merit. After a long discourse to this purpose, we quitted the Park. The Colonel, whose coach was in waiting, insisted on my stepping into it, that he might have the honor of accompanying me home ; therefore, to prevent any further solicitations, I got in, and he drew up all the blinds. This I thought rather singular, but did not notice it, as I thought there

there might be some particular motive for the caution, and that was the reason I did not express my surprise to the detested being who had entertained me, as he imagined, with his hateful conversation. The horses had been travelling upwards of an hour, when I asked him if his intention was to call any where before he set me down, because I thought we were longer than usual. Yes, my angelic creature, returned this artful deliberating monster, we have a great many relays to make on our journey before my charmer arrives at her destined habitation. Bless me, Colonel, your discourse is rather mysterious, I replied, striving to suppress my agitation of mind. Not in the least, my adorable angel, and now that I have you in my own possession, I can without apprehension divulge a secret. I love you, and therefore have observed this precaution, that no power on earth shall divide us. I thought I must have fainted at the declaration of this monster of iniquity; but recovering myself, by a recollection that my escape could not be accomplished but by artifice, I suppressed my indignation, and determined to pursue such methods as would extricate me effectually. I was well read in novels, where the heroines

roines generally lost their aim by a too precipitate avowal of their hatred towards the usurping tyrants who had them at their own disposal, for which reason I was resolved, by an opposite system of behaviour, to facilitate an escape, by returning an answer which, to appearance, favoured his design; and I began to ask what was the reason he did not acquaint me with his intentions. His answer was, that if such a sentence had escaped his lips, I should undoubtedly have been on my guard to prevent the execution. Give me leave to ask you one question, Colonel, Did I ever evince such a dislike for your person, that should render you dubious of my partiality? No, but I had refused so many offers, that himself was drove to despair. You should have made an effort first, Colonel: However, as I find equivocation is vain, I can faithfully assure you, that you are the gentleman upon whom my affections are unalterably fixed; but while your advances were slow, could I, in honor, avow my tender partiality? No, modesty and virtue, which ought to be a female's constant attendants, forbid my tongue to utter what my eyes, those speaking oracles of my heart, proclaimed. Is it possible, Lady Caroline? Are you in earnest? Do you

you doubt my sincerity, Sir?—No, my compassionate angel, thou all that's lovely of thy sex, suffer me thus, by a fond embrace, to tell how much I love. Oh, heavens, how my heart recoiled at the monster's touch! I was obliged to dissimulate, on asking him how far we had to travel? To Ireland, my amiable Caroline, where our nuptials will be celebrated. How was I overjoyed to hear the wretch intended to defer the expectation of his intended bliss so long; for though I was going further from my relations, yet it would afford me an opportunity of escaping this monster of perfidy's vigilance. We travelled on till evening, when we arrived at an inn, where I persuaded him to stay that night. He consented, though very reluctantly, with a proviso, that I would permit him to be in the adjoining apartment. I appeared to resent the doubts he entertained of my candor, though at the same time telling him, to show I was above any mean artifice, I had not the least objection to his suspicious proposal. When the servant conducted me to a chamber, I asked her in a whisper, if any gentlemen who were travelling had arrived that evening? She replied in the negative, and I began to be apprehensive of the consequences

quences that might ensue. However, I dismissed the servant, and flung myself on the bed; but sleep, that balmy comforter to distressed minds, would not approach my eye-lids; and, to prolong the time of our departure I laid till eleven o'clock the proceeding morning, my ideas racked with excruciating torments; I durst not walk about the room, as that would raise suspicious doubts in the tyrant's breast under whose jurisdiction I then was. Yet to render him common justice, his whole deportment was actuated by honor. For how many who had a female in the situation of myself, would have taken advantage of the night to perpetrate their horrid and execrable designs, and then oblige her to marry him. His chariot had been in readiness from seven in the morning, but I made no preparation for a departure till one; and when we arrived at the water side, we were informed an embargo had been laid on every vessel in port, and they durst not put to sea till further orders. I strove to suppress the transports I felt rising in my breast on this joyful occasion, by assuming a countenance imprinted with sorrow. How different were the sensations I experienced in my mind! But dissimulation was the grand point, to
arrive

arrive at the summit of a glorious freedom; therefore I pretended to rail at my tender affectionate father (sentiments widely distant from my heart) for his officious care. However, I continued, though he has frustrated our intentions here, I am confident he cannot at another port; let us proceed directly to Dover, where two hours passage will waft us safe to Calais, and then, Colonel, we shall be able to escape his officious vigilance. No, he replied, that would not succeed; for, in all probability, an embargo had been laid on all vessels in that port too. Don't despair, my dear Sir; for though we have met with this misfortune here, we may quickly remedy it by a journey to Dover. I spoke this with such an energy, that it was impossible he should doubt my veracity, though I sincerely wished we might find it as he apprehended. Heaven knows how many miles we travelled, but the next morning we reached Dover. When we alighted, I desired they would conduct me to a private apartment. Here I put the same question to the servant that I did to the other, but with greater success, for she replied in the affirmative. Transported with the thoughts of regaining my freedom, I eagerly enquired, where was he going?

going? Where did he come from? In short, I would scarce give the person time to resolve me one question, before I put half a dozen more to her. After she had satisfied me, in saying it was the Earl of Hamwick, who had returned from his travels, I repaired to the room where the Colonel was sitting, and in an humble manner solicited his permission to retire for an hour, as I was extremely fatigued. He replied, I might, but not to stay longer than the time I had limited. I promised not to exceed it, and retired, not to rest, as he imagined, but to the presence of a man who is as godlike in his disposition and behaviour as in humanity. I had often heard my brother mention the Earl, as a gentleman who possessed an equal share of courage, generosity, and humanity; he had been a friend to the widow, and a father to the orphan. 'Twas he, and he alone, who was the proper person to apply to for redress. Surely, Louisa, he was sent hither by Providence to protect your unhappy Caroline, who had been completely wretched ere this, had it not been for that generous nobleman, who assured me of a safe deliverance the moment I had informed him of my distress. Before our departure, the Earl wrote a note, and
calling

calling the servant aside, desired him to deliver that to Colonel M'Farson when the carriage was gone, and inform him the Earl of Hamwick had rescued Lady Caroline Rivers. I overheard the command, and entreated him to retract it. But he replied, don't be alarmed, Madam, be assured no danger is intended; but should a man who pretends to take a lady under his protection, see her injured—injured in the most tender point, that of her honor, and not defend her cause? I am perfectly convinced, had I a sister in the same situation of your Ladyship, who put herself under the protection of the noble Lord, your brother, he would justify her, at the expence of his life, and shall I see his sister, who I have heard him mention as the most amiable of her sex—but his praise fell far short of your Ladyship's due—Shall I, I repeat, see her injured by a worthless monster, and delay to imitate a virtuous example? Give me leave, Madam, presenting his hand with a grace peculiar to himself alone, to lead you to the carriage; be assured the Colonel will not pursue us. Oh, Louisa, should the wretch resent this behaviour, which the rank he possesses in the army will oblige him to, what will become of Caroline, who must
 never

never expect to receive a moment's alleviation from sorrow. Oh, gracious heaven, should her deliverer receive a mortal pass from the sword of the assassinating Colonel—For, ah, my Louisa, was he not my protector, when my father and brother could afford me no assistance? Another wound to my reflection, my brother—yes, my brother is involved in an endless quarrel, into which my unthinking self drew him, but cannot contrive the means to extricate him. Oh, honor, honor, thou art an empty sound! Vain illusive bubble! What foolish madman was it who first brought mankind to a knowledge of thy vain name? 'Tis thou who art the forerunner of so many dismal wars; 'tis thou who art the eternal destruction of so many families, by the father or brother losing his life in thy cause; and it is thou who will crush me with the penetrating anguish that surrounds me from every quarter, by the death either of my deliverer or brother. Oh, my dear, my affectionate Louisa, pity your disconsolate Caroline, who discerns impending ruin pursue her footsteps, wherever she turns, in hopes of awarding the dire and dismal blow of ill-fated fortune! Ah, my kind friend, if you have the least spark of compassion remaining for
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the wretched destroyer of herself and family, evince it now—now, my Louisa, by soliciting the Countess's permission to fly to the succor of your desponding melancholy friend, that she may ease her heart, which is ready to burst, by imparting her incessant griefs to her Louisa's generous bosom——But my woman informs me my kind deliverer is come to enquire after my health.

Adieu.



LET.

LETTER THE SIXTEENTH.

THE EARL OF HAMWICK TO THE NO-
 NOURABLE GEORGE SEYMOUR.

Portman Square.

Dear George,

I Arrived at Dover yesterday, where the
 strangest rencounter happened to me on
 my landing that ever befel any one. It
 was a lady who flew to me for protection,
 from an infamous villain who had ran
 away with her, under pretence of making
 her marry him. Oh, George, such ex-
 cellence as her's was not formed for the
 arms of the bold ravisher. It was Lord
 River's sister, my friend, her whom you
 have heard his Lordship mention as an
 example for her sex. His praise was very

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poor,

poor, when set in competition with the Lady's merit. Imagine you see the lovely fugitive, arrayed in white, her enchanting tresses flowing carelessly entangled down her snowy bosom, while her angelic face, that lovely emblem of her mind, was bedewed with tears, and her hands clasped, craving—on her knees craving a safe deliverance from a monster, whose image was odious to her sight. Could you, George, have viewed the lovely charmer—charming even in distress, with an obdurate heart? No, it would have been an utter impossibility to behold such incomparable beauty, and remain deaf to all her intreaties. I rescued the fair mourner, and placed her safe under the protection of her father and brother. The latter we met coming in pursuit of the divine woman. And now I have wrote you this intelligence, permit me to acquaint you with the situation of my affairs: you know, my friend, what to attribute the cause of my travels to, or if not, I must tell you. It was occasioned by my father's mercenary motives, when Miss Hopkins cast an eye of admiration on my unfortunate person. My father and her's, who were distant relations, signed a contract, unknown to me (though it was not without the

the approbation and consent of the lady), at whose suggestion it was first brought on the carpet, that at the time I arrived at the age of four-and-twenty, we were to be married, or either of the parties who started an objection were to forfeit fifty thousand pounds. My father came in to my room one morning, and desired I would sign my name to a paper which he brought in his hand. I, who had no suspicion of a contract, as I was scarce nineteen at the time, nor entertained an idea so far to the prejudice of my father, as to imagine he would be guilty of a mean action, signed the paper without enquiring his motive for it. But on reflection the next morning, I determined to ask him what the paper contained; however, he prevented my intention, by asking if I knew what that paper was which I had set my name to the preceding day? No, my Lord, I replied, you desired me to sign it, which I did, as I could not think my father capable of injuring his only child. No, my boy, he returned, nor never will, but you have signed a contract, Henry, to marry Miss Hopkins. Is it possible, Sir, you could think of drawing me into this snare without suffering me to consult my heart on such an awful occasion? But be assured

I cannot nor will not permit this deception to continue. How will you help yourself, Henry, you have set your name to it, and that's sufficient? Pray, young gentleman, if I may be permitted to ask the question without offending your honor, what particular motive can oblige you thus obstinately to reject the person of a wealthy handsome, young heiress, who will at her father's death be possessed of fifty thousand pounds a year? I have no particular objection to the Lady, Sir, as the whole sex is equally indifferent to me at present; but if I must comply with the articles already signed, you, my Lord, must comply with my desire, to travel till the time arrives for celebrating the nuptials. My views in this is to augment the flame; because, as it is not very fervent on my side, the length of time will rather diminish than encrease it, if we are not separated. He consented to my proposal, and I prepared for a quick departure, while my father laid strict injunctions on me to avoid the power of another's beauty, adding, that though I did not love the lady with the fervour which was required on the occasion, yet it would evince the character of a villain to neglect her, when I was convinced she preserved
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an unconquerable attachment to me. Reflect, Henry, continued my father, what an eternal stigma it will remain on your future character, to be branded with the ignominious appellation of a wretch who had forfeited his word, his honor, his faith, his every virtue, in the neglect of a person he was bound to protect. His discourse softened me, till by degrees I found myself absorbed in tears. He took advantage of the moment, and would not wave the subject till I had, in the most solemn manner assured him, though it should cost me my life, I would not be the wilful occasion of raising a blush on his countenance for my conduct. When I was abroad, you must be sensible, from ocular demonstration, I regarded myself as one whose heart was already disposed of, and therefore preserved it proof against every attack the Italian ladies thought proper to advance. The news of my father's sudden death recalled me to England much earlier than I expected, or, in short, intended. — When I landed at Dover, it was with a determined resolution of fulfilling the contract, and uniting myself with a person I had not the most ardent passion for. Then — then, George, that my unrelenting stars should

send Lady Caroline to torment a heart but ill at union with itself, was cruel beyond conception. The lovely charmer's distress pleaded her cause sufficiently for my future peace. Be assured, my friend, when I marry the lady of my father's choice, I relinquish all pretensions to happiness for ever. How is it possible, or does it stand to reason, that I, who never entertained the most extraordinary partiality in favour of Miss Hopkins, should on a sudden acquire the sincere attachment towards that lady, which ought to guide the nuptial ceremony, after beholding her incomparable rival, for such I find she has gained the entire ascendancy over my wretched heart. But why should I declare my capricious folly, in suffering love to triumph over reason? Why not retire from a world my father's mercenary views has rendered odious to imagination? and immured in some secret recess which would be impossible for another human being to explore, obliterate the remembrance of the generous Lord Rivers's amiable sister. No, that is base, I will never swerve from the promise I made my father, lest his ashes should rise up in the day of judgment, to curse his remaining offspring, for weakly forfeiting his honor to one lady

lady, in behalf of another's transient beauty. No, I will tear the remembrance of Lady Caroline's image from my heart, and there place that of the less amiable Miss Hopkins. But Oh, my friend, could you but know the perfections that grace Lady Caroline's mind ! they are a treasure which the man who is formed for her will triumph over all his sex in the possession. That happiness was not intended for such a wretched being as I am. She is void of affectation, deception never could discover a vacancy big enough in her generous mind to take up its habitation ; vain glory is beneath her pursuit ; hypocrisy and slander were never known to enter her thoughts, nor either would she permit another to give a loose to malignant aspersions to the prejudice of an absent person in her presence. This, my friend, is the worst character I have been able to learn of that charming woman. As to our sex, the major part of them are so justly infatuated with her charms, that they are determined to have the life of the infamous Colonel, who so artfully contrived her ruin. I have just been to pay my respects to Lady Caroline, and enquire after her health. Her Ladyship received me with an insatuating grace peculiar to herself

alone ; but could you have heard the acknowledgments she returned me for saving her life, as she generously termed the assistance I afforded her, it would have vanquished your hard heart for ever. In the course of conversation I hinted the necessity I was under of visiting a lady I had not seen since my return, adding, I supposed her father would chide me for the neglect. As I sat next her, it gave me an opportunity of observing her countenance, which was wan with the fatigue of mind she had been obliged to endure. A blush overspread her angelic face ; on a sudden her Ladyship turned pale, and fainted in my arms. On her recovery, she pleaded an excuse for the awkward situation I had seen her in, but added, swoonings had overpowered her frame several times that morning, and must solicit my pardon, if she took the liberty of retiring. I bowed an assent, led her to the door, and took my leave. Sure, George, the divine creature has not conceived a partiality in favor of me. By heavens, if I thought it was possible for such an idea to occur in the lovely charmer's mind, I would resign the cash stipulated in the contract with pleasure, though I should diminish my estate to twenty thousand a year. Yet, why
should

should I be vain of my person, Lady Caroline's discomposure was no doubt occasioned by the generous apprehension of the Colonel's meeting and killing me, and by that means the lady find herself bereft of a husband. Yes, that must be the motive for her swooning when I mentioned Miss Hopkins. However, I proceeded from the Earl's house to that of Mr. Hopkins, where I was introduced to his daughter, who, that gentleman assured me, was allowed by most people to be an accomplished young lady; but I confess I could not discover those amiable qualities in Miss Hopkins which I could discern in the gentle Lady Caroline. I may be deceived in the former lady, or, if not, she has a competent share of affectation. But why should I pretend to find imperfections in her, is she not destined for my wife? And Mr. Hopkins, vainly imagining to complete my felicity, informed me his daughter would comply with his commands, the moment I thought proper to espouse her. I returned my acknowledgments in a manner no ways suitable for the honor intended, but added, I must solicit his permission to defer the nuptials till decency would permit (here I alluded to my father's death), and the old gentleman acquiesced:

with the request, saying, Faith I had forgot that; well, Henry, you are a dutiful boy. Though I cannot approve of dissimulation by any means, yet in this one instance it brought me off with surprising eclat; at the same time, had I revealed the true situation of my mind, it would have been attended with dangerous consequences. In short, I know not what plan to pursue; it is a dastardly disposition to resign Miss Hopkins, since affairs have proceeded to the length they have. I make no doubt but the lady has refused much better offers than me, and those who have entertained a passion for her which is never to be effaced; therefore it would be a most villainous action on my side to make a female wretched by a cool neglect of her endeavours to please. But, upon reflection, I flatter myself in the idea, I never was remarked for a morose, savage disposition, nor neither could I bring myself to treat with disdain a woman who had generously preserved her attachment unfulfilled from another object, to confer it on me. No, it is a base action my soul abhors! Another circumstance I have weighed in my mind, Lady Caroline's partiality in favor of another object may continue as firm as Miss Hopkins's towards my ungracious self,

self, for which reason I have determined to banish every pleasing sensation that may occur in favor of Lady Caroline, and perpetually keep in view the generous sentiments of Miss Hopkins. Now, dear George, I must conclude myself your sincere, though unfortunate friend,

HAMWICK.



LETTER THE SEVENTEENTH.

LADY CAROLINE RIVERS TO LADY
LOUISA BEAUMONT.

Berkley-square.

OH! my dear Louisa, I am ruined, inevitably undone! The only man I could ever bring my capricious fancy to regard with pleasure, has disposed of his heart, and intends, shortly, to give his hand where his heart (distracting idea) has found a secure establishment for so many years.—Yes, my friend, the amiable Earl of Hamwick is contracted to a Lady the late Earl made choice of for his son's wife; because chance had allotted her the handsome heiress of a wealthy gentleman. My brother has informed me too, that my humane deliverer is very much attached to the intended partner of his bed;—then—indeed

indeed there is no hope for the unfortunate Caroline! Ah why did he afford me protection? Why not banish humanity from his generous breast, when such a forlorn wretch as Caroline entered the room? No, he is above such mercenary motives, as to wish to save his own life at the time his fellow creature's is in danger. He was not charmed with my person: Oh it would be a folly to cherish the illusive idea; because I have myself received ocular demonstration that his fidelity has been preserved sincere, even abroad, in this licentious age, towards the object of his esteem. Happy woman, who had charms sufficient to engross the whole affections of the most amiable of his sex. Nay, yourself shall judge whether my suspicions are void of foundation. Yesterday his Lordship did me the favour of a visit, or to use his own expression, did himself the supreme honor of attending my Ladyship much earlier than was convenient to me; and the cause he assigned for it, was, that he had rendered himself wretched the preceding evening, under the apprehension that the fatigue I had endured was too much for my weak frame. Could it have been possible for you to see his behaviour at the moment, you would have concluded he was addressing himself

himself to me in the true stile of a lover. — Such condescension in his manners, such a timidity in his speech, as if apprehensive of uttering a word to disoblige his eternal slave, (for such I know myself to be); and then his eyes seemed to glisten, with rapture, when my averted eye, which shunned to meet his, stole a glance at his Lordship's more than manlike face. Oh, gracious Heaven! what true politeness is there blended with the hero's kind affability. — Sure he has vanquished troops of celebrated beauties, and, in remembrance of the victories obtained, places the trophies next his heart, to lay them, on return to his native home, as acceptable offerings, at the feet of his adorable mistress. — Ah! that I could remain invisible, to behold with what an air the haughty fair one receives the invincible conqueror of her own sex; but, with what rapture will she receive the intelligence, that they had been all rejected and relinquished for her? Shall Lady Caroline Rivers meanly stoop, and suffer her heart to remain at the feet of his haughty mistress, to be spurned at? No, my pride will not, I am confident, permit me to remain long a slave to the man who doats on another. I have received a convincing proof in the conversation, that she possesses

possesses his whole heart. Our discourse happened to turn on the late Earl's sudden death, and I believe it might escape his lips inadvertently, as he afterwards appeared evidently confused, the obligation he was under of paying his respects to a Lady who he had not seen since his return home, and was of opinion her friends would be angry at the seeming neglect. This, it is evident, evinces his partiality in her favor, or why should he render himself unhappy and wretched, because he had not seen that one Lady in particular? Would you believe it, Louisa? Lady Caroline's reason retained such a weak ascendancy over her person, at the time when a strong guard was requisite to prevent an attempt, that all her efforts were rendered ineffectual to suppress the starting tear, and she found herself a prey to a fainting fit; and, rising to prevent it, swooned in the arms of a man, who had the moment before expressed his impatience to clasp in his arms her Ladyship's adorable rival. Yet, why should I permit such an ungenerous idea to find a habitation within my soul? The gentleman could not imagine I was any ways interested in his behalf! and therefore was not aware of the consequences that ensued. I was equally ashamed and confused, at the absurd part I
had

had been acting, and thought the most prudent method I could adopt, would be to withdraw. I excused myself as well as the situation I had recovered from would permit, and solicited his Lordship's permission to quit the room. But, Oh! with what generous concern did he grant the request; — with what a tender solicitude did he express his grief for my indisposition; and Oh! with what careful humanity did he lead me to the door, where, committing me to the care of my woman, retired, with tears trickling down his cheeks! Sure, Louisa, it cannot be hypocrisy? No, banish for ever that unjust thought, it were to accuse my charming deliverer of so vile a sin. It is all a mystery to me, that I know not how to unravel; but if my Louisa was with her friend, she would dispel many melancholly hours, and teach me to receive and endure, with fortitude, every severe blow that ill fated fortune chose to inflict. Heavens! the stroke cannot be awarded! No, it is impossible. The abominable wretch. — Yes, my Louisa, nothing can save your friend's life at present, her compassionate, humane deliverer will be assassinated by the vile colonel, who premeditated my eternal ruin. He will completely finish his detested purposes by the death

death of the hero, who generously rescued me from misery. Who would strive to do an action praise-worthy, if it was to be repaid with death's dire sickle? I am sure the Colonel is in town, tho' my father wishes to persuade me he is not. Why is my brother so reserved? Why so confused, and hesitate when I put a question to him? Ah! my suspicions are but too true! And shall I stand still to see that brave, that best of men murdered by a villainous usurper? No, though my strength is but little, my spirit is great; and for once I will renounce the feminine spirit in behalf of one who has justice and equity on his side. If the Earl is killed, my brother finds himself under the necessity of resenting the injury offered me, and likewise revenging the cause of the noble Earl; therefore, to terminate every further altercation that may ensue, I will set spies over every action of the Earl's, who will faithfully inform me of his proceedings, and, should I find any apprehension of a duel, I will, myself, arrayed in man's apparel, meet and fight the wretch who thus wilfully premeditates the death of my protector. Nay, don't start, Louisa, at mention of it; but reflect on the tie of gratitude that compels me to the rash attempt. Yes, it was at me the in-
jury

jury was levelled, and it is I, and I alone
 that ought to resent it;—the monster shall
 feel the effects of my arm, which though
 weak, yet he shall experience it is invin-
 cible, when revenge calls for its aid. Yes,
 traitor, a woman, when urged by just re-
 venge, like mine, can vanquish numbers.
 Oh Louisa! the agitation of mind I endure
 is not to be paralleled;—I cannot support
 life much longer, nature is almost exhaust-
 ed with the fatigues I have undergone, and
 I tremble for the fatal consequence that
 will ensue when I am no more. My bro-
 ther's passion will hurry him beyond the
 bounds of reason; revenge, that illusive
 comforter to an injured person, will gain
 the ascendancy over every faculty, and pre-
 vent slow paced reason from exerting her
 claim. Come then, my Louisa, and by
 thy presence, add a small share of anima-
 tion to my drooping spirits, and strive to
 reconcile my father and brother to my dis-
 solution, which I find draws nigh, unless
 the divine power exerts his benign influ-
 ence to prevent the unrelenting blow of
 fortune. You, my friend, will strive to
 suppress every perturbation which you find
 rising in the breast of my amiable brother;
 and my father too, Louisa. You must, by
 a union with my brother, compensate him
 for

for the loss of his unfortunate Caroline :— You, my dear, will make an excellent daughter to the best of fathers. — Lady Rake, that amiable and deserving woman, will esteem your merit, for the confidence I have always reposed in your generous breast. The Earl of Hamwick too will not, should he survive the Colonel's deliberating snare, hold your favor in less estimation for being a friend to the person he rescued from misery, to languish out a few more days of wretched existence. And his Countess may, in time, through the recommendation of her friends, place the same confidence in you that I have already done; but, be assured she cannot, no, it is impossible, love you with the same disinterested motives I have ever evinced on the most trivial occasion. I feel such a melancholy depression upon my spirits that renders me an insipid companion; therefore my loss will be the less experienced, at the time I draw my latest breath; but the idea of my venerable parent's grief, afflicts me most of all. Be quick, my kind, compassionate Louisa, that I may end my last moments happy on thy affectionate breast; but, should death's dire warrant summons me before the great tribunal, ere the arrival of my amiable friend, I strictly charge
you

you not to depress your mind by the deep furrow of sorrow's poignant anguish, on my account, as I sincerely trust in divine Majesty who will render me securely blest. There is no one but has some faults to answer for, yet, I trust I am not the most abandoned of beings. I have never committed any wilful offence, and I rest in the perfect assurance of obtaining forgiveness; as that is all I can require, I remain, while in this transitory life, your sincerely affectionate friend,

CAROLINE RIVERS.



LET.

LETTER THE EIGHTEENTH.

LADY LOUISA BEAUMONT TO LADY
CAROLINE RIVERS.

Goodwill Hall.

IN former letters, how has my Caroline boasted the surprising penetration she possessed? But may not I be permitted to assert, with more propriety, that Louisa is mistress of a much greater share? The proof is indisputable. Did I not, by letter, perpetually remind you of the approaching disaster? and now that it is arrived, you, poor soul, incapable to endure the least shock of misfortune, are talking of quitting the world. Oh! for shame, my dear, for Heaven's sake exert your former vivacity to dispel incorrigible vapours; it is nothing else, believe me, that disturbs your rest, at present, and if you thus patiently

tiently give yourself up entirely to melancholy sensations, and suffer them to gain the ascendancy, I am apprehensive, what you illuſively imagine, at preſent, will terminate in reality the period of my Caroline's life. Not one friend you have, experienced more affliction, not even your father or brother, Caroline, than I, at the idea of the monſter's tearing my dear friend from the protection of their arms; nor never could they more ſincerely ſympathize in the Earl's taking you from the wretch than myſelf. I allow, you have reaſon to be cautious of his future welfare; yet, you are not to be acceſſary to your own death, by an unneceſſary approach to meet it. Depend on my word, your deliverer will not come to any danger. You ſay he is brave, noble, generous, compaſſionate, humane, and to compleat the whole number, godlike. All theſe encomiums are to be expected from your grateful acknowledgements; but if the Earl is poſſeſſed of half thoſe accompliſhments you make him ſole maſter of, he does not want prudence, and that will ſufficiently protect him from imminent danger, therefore keep your mind perfectly ſerene on that reflection. I wiſh I could bring you to think of him with leſs emotion; and the
only

only way I can recommend is to consider his Lordship in the light of a married man, who rendered you a signal service that remembrance will never efface, therefore it is your duty, my dear, to respect the Lady of his father's choice, instead of envying her the happiness. But now I am arrived at this subject, I will send you my sincere thoughts on the occasion, which are, that the Lady is less agreeable to his Lordship than you imagine; for you think he expressed an impatience to visit her; I, on the contrary, regard it as a visit of compulsion. Had it been a voluntary one, why not make his appearance at the Lady's house the instant he arrived? If it was a sincere attachment, the Earl, by your description, has too much gallantry to oblige the friends of the Lady to resent the neglect. You have informed me there is a contract. It is not impossible but the late Earl compelled the present to a compliance with his commands. If affairs are thus situated, there cannot be much esteem within the breast of the Earl towards the Lady. However, should it be a match of his own choice, or not, I could wish you to adopt the determination you came to in one part of your last, where you say, Pride will not suffer you to remain long a slave.

slave. Why not evince that so much boasted pride, before love, that bane to society, gains the entire ascendancy over every other sensation? You say the Earl is the only person you could ever think on with pleasure. Suffer me to ask your heart one question, nor imagine your friend severe, when she wishes to be informed by you, with sincerity, how you, in a similar situation with the Lady in question, would brook the neglect offered by a person you had been taught to regard as a husband for years past? Would you, I repeat, consign that person to be the husband of another, (who had just seen, and been enraptured with him) devoid of the most poignant anguish? Certainly not. Does it stand to reason, that you can have such an affectionate regard for him as the destined bride? No, nor neither can I, from the portrait, conclude the Earl is what the vulgar term a non-such. I do not mean to depreciate his Lordship's merit, as one instance alone renders him praise-worthy, the situation of your first acquaintance proved decisive. Doubts and apprehensions had gained possession of your frame. Such a generous deliver as you describe, could not fail exciting gratitude in the breast of the most turbulent. How then could it fail

fail receiving its due from that of my more tender Caroline? You was free from all other impressions, therefore the danger became the greater, as love insensibly stole upon your mind with imperceptible fascination. You was unconscious of your own weakness, nor gave yourself time to think there was an obstacle to surmount. Animated by the generosity of his behaviour it rendered you destitute of thought at the time it was most required—reason was incapable to support the conflict with such an eccentric companion—you did not request her aid at the critical moment, therefore you weakly imagine she will not lend her assistance when applied too. Your progress, hitherto, with a new companion, through the regions of love and fancy, has been too rapid for reason to follow. In short, you have, thoughtless of consequences, been a further course than is limited to that sage goddess. But could you prevail on yourself, return to her district, where time, aided by her influence, will contribute to destroy the illusion; the restoration of your tranquillity will add fresh animation to every object around; the force of your attachment, will probably prevent your discerning the contempt and ridicule that you will be exposed to,

Should the truth be made public; and, as absence is the only remedy to cure a love sick mind, I have meditated on every expedient to prevent the world arriving at a knowledge of your casual weakness; and have at last concluded, that your compliance, in favouring us with a visit, tho' I am confident the trial will be painful, will elude the vigilance of curious inquisitives, who make it their chief study to inculcate others with an idea of your folly, as they will term it. Reflect, then, my dear, on the danger which threatens you— dangers like those, to such a mind as yours, are most to be dreaded, for the very mention of any one's suspecting you of cherishing a partiality for the Earl, would vulnerate your pride beyond expression. — Would you wish to prevent every slanderous tongue finding vent on your, as yet, un sullied reputation, awake, my dear Caroline, from this stupid lethargy, which, at present incapacitates you from observing the evils which surround you. You must, my dear, however poignant the anguish may appear to imagination in the execution, quit the spot where his Lordship resides. Believe me, it will not be so severe in reality as it appears in illusion— make a glorious effort to regain your liberty,

berty, which, with the most unfeigned sorrow, I see is in the possession of the much admired Earl. My mother has granted her permission for my attending you, and I must insist on your accompanying me when I return, where you will again re-assume your native vivacity, in the pleasant retirements of rural felicity, which is the only method to establish your future tranquillity. You may trust to my mother's experience, when I assure you, in her name, it is requisite to absent yourself from the fascinating conversation of a man who has rendered himself but too amiable in your sight already. However I shall very soon receive the pleasing satisfaction of conversing with you in person. Adieu, till the much wished for time arrives, that I shall clasp my Caroline in the affectionate arms of her

LOUISA BEAUMONT.

LETTER THE NINETEENTH.

THE EARL OF HAMWICK TO THE HON.
GEORGE SEYMOUR.

Portman-square.

YES, George, she is more than woman; and I cannot, no, nor will not exist without her. I delivered this amiable lady from the tyranny of a wretch, who, if we may judge by his brutality, cannot be stiled a man: and this charming example of her sex, in a grateful return, prolonged my life. From henceforth I have determined to devote it to her interest entirely. Oh that I could arrive at the knowledge, whether it was love or gratitude that urged her to the rash attempt; the generosity of her disposition is not to be paralleled.— But if I proceed in this stile, it will be an impossibility to define my meaning, and you will not be able to unravel the unaccountable

countable mystery. I informed you in my last, that I rescued Lady Caroline Rivers from the premeditated designs of a ruffian; in consequence of which he arrived in town two days since. I received intimation of it directly; and by what means, I know not; yet her ladyship arrived at the knowledge of the Colonel's return at the same time. I received a note from her that evening, expressing a desire to see me on an accident that had occurred, of the utmost consequence. Lady Caroline's summons was obeyed instantaneously, and I found myself in her presence before I knew I had quitted my home, so precipitate was I in evincing my zeal to oblige her ladyship. After discoursing on different subjects, she told me she had a favour to solicit, and hoped I would not resent the liberty she had taken, by repulsing her with a denial. I took the hint, by suspecting, as I afterwards found, it related to the Colonel; and replied, that I made a point of obliging the ladies as far my weak power would permit; but Lady Caroline in particular, I hoped, would never receive any cause to harbour disagreeable sensations to my prejudice. "That would be impossible, my Lord, the idea of your humanity will never be effaced from the tablet of

my memory. But will your Lordship promise upon honour to comply with my request." Lady Caroline cannot demand an unreasonable one; and if it is any thing my honour will permit, without an injury, you may depend on an immediate compliance. "That is as much as to say, if you find it borders on female judgment, you must beg to be excused; but I assure your Lordship, instead of sullyng your honour, 'twill add a lustre to your reputation which no time can obliterate." Your Ladyship cannot form a wish in opposition to the most delicate propriety, therefore I promise you, on my honour, if your demands terminate as I imagine, I shall acquiesce the moment Lady Caroline's commands are issued. "If I am to command, your Lordship must avoid a duel with Colonel M'Farlon: Now, my Lord, time alone will evince whether my commands are strictly adhered to, as my zeal for your welfare requires." Zeal for my welfare! what could that mean? However, I replied, her Ladyship might render her mind perfectly satisfied, I should avoid shedding the blood of a fellow-creature, though he had treated the most amiable of her sex with unmanly behaviour; since it was her desire I should not chastise him according
to

to his demerit: adding (with a desire to pass her fears as a joke) I have too much regard for my own life to throw it away in behalf of a trifling quarrel. You, my dear George, know how different this idle assertion was to the true sentiments of my mind. You know, my dear friend, when the honor of a virtuous woman is in question, I regard life as a blessing bestowed for a short time; which at the limited period we are under the necessity of delivering up to the Almighty who gave it; and according to the good or evil we have done in this transitory life, we are rewarded: and if we lose it in maintaining a just and honourable cause, our memory is esteemed in this world when we are no more. Yesterday I received a note from the Colonel, desiring my presence at St. James's coffee-house. I went, not with a heart overwhelmed with apprehension; For I scorn a coward; but with the same composure I have evinced on similar occasions. The waiter introduced me into a private room, where the Colonel was sitting. On my entrance he rose, and without any preface began, "I presume this meeting was expected from the first hour of your Lordship's arrival in town." No, Sir, on the contrary, it has continued quite unexpect-

ed till this moment. "You don't mean to brand me with the appellation of a coward," he replied, seemingly irritated. Be composed, Sir, I mean to do you no injury. "The devil you dont; — but I have this to inform your Lordship, though you are a nobleman, you have acted unworthy the character." And so, Colonel, you have, out of pure compassion, demanded my presence, to let me know you think so! I am extremely obliged to your charity, I confess, (bowing quite contemptuously). "'Sdeath, do you dare render me a proper object to vent your contempt and ridicule on, my Lord?" I am much concerned, that a person who stiles himself an officer under his Majesty, should subject himself to censure from the absurd haughtiness of his present behaviour. "I am a gentleman as well as your Lordship." A commission entitles you to the rank of one, I confess. "And as a gentleman I am determined to be treated by every one, your Lordship in particular." Why me in particular, Colonel, I am not the weak person you may imagine? "Nor neither will I permit the Earl of Hamwick to triumph and usurp over me in this arrogant stile." The Earl does not wish to extort such a mean submission from the most abject

ject being, he is unequal to the task I assure you, Colonel; but if this is the conversation you mean to pursue, I must bid you good morning, Sir. "You shall not stir, my Lord, till I have received ample satisfaction;" placing himself before the door. You don't mean to detain me, Sir, I'm in haste. "Yes, my Lord, I insist upon your drawing." I have not a pencil about me at present, Sir, another time I shall be able to oblige you. "No trifling evasion, my Lord, draw your sword." My sword, ha! ha! you are facetious, Colonel, don't you see I'm in an undress. "Why then you'll put yourself in a full dress to-morrow morning by seven o'clock, and meet me in Hyde-park." For what, Sir? "To fight, my Lord." To fight! ridiculous conception! so I'm to dress in my best to prepare for death; but, Colonel, as I perceive this affair will terminate in serious consequences if not attended to, permit me to ask you what is your motive for a duel? "You have injured me." So you have informed me. "In bereaving me of Lady Caroline Rivers." I understand you now, Sir; do you call that an injury? "Yes, my Lord, it is an injury that calls aloud for revenge." You are at liberty to think

so, Sir, I shall not attempt to undeceive you; but I would wish you to know that I glory in rescuing beauty and innocence from the lawless ravages of vice and infamy. "Explain your meaning, my Lord." That I am willing to do at any time, Sir; I flatter myself my discourse is not unintelligible. "Yes, it is unintelligible — otherwise what do you mean by vice and infamy?" What I am not under the least apprehension of repeating, Colonel; I say, Sir, the man who would run away, in the clandestine manner you did with her Ladyship, is a most abandoned profligate, who is entirely destitute of every virtuous principle. "My intentions were honorable, and as such I would wish your Lordship to understand are likewise truly virtuous." My sentiments will not permit me to coincide with yours, Sir, as I shall ever retain the opinion I have long since formed, that a man must be very conscious of his small abilities to please the fair sex, when he stoops so meanly low as to debase his reputation, in the eyes of every honest person, by stealing a Lady. "I believe I am as capable of pleasing the fair sex as your Lordship." I never aimed to dispute your power, Colonel; the person I am destined
to

to pass my days with I will strive to render myself as agreeable to as possible; the rest of her sex I will strive to merit their esteem by exerting my life to their advantage; and the man who dares do otherwise is not worthy the confidence and esteem of any one. "As to that, my Lord, you had much better leave the ladies to themselves, the generality of the pretty souls have excellent understandings; but very probably, may I presume to ask, have they elected you their counsellor in public discord?" No, Sir, I have adopted myself their protector from private robbers. "And therefore, as a true knight-errant to the amiable Dulcineas, you thought yourself sufficiently justified in tearing Lady Caroline from the arms of a husband." Who has a right to claim that affectionate title? "I have; and as a wronged husband, will resent the injury." I fancy, Colonel, if I had not taken upon myself to chastise your vile deception towards that lady, an injured brother's arm would have done the office. "He is not injured." No thanks to you, Colonel. "It was with her Ladyship's consent I intended to make her my wife." 'Twas all artifice. "Will your Lordship deny that Lady Caroline got into my carriage with-

out compulsion, or in short, any one kind of violence offered her?" 'Twas, as you meanly insinuated, with a desire of returning the quicker to Berkeley-square. "Will Lady Caroline deny the partiality she expressed towards me?" Base artifice, of your own inventing, drew the lady into your ensnaring wiles; therefore she had an indisputable right to repay your deception in its own stile, for the purpose of extricating herself the more effectually. "Why then, my Lord, you may tell her from me, she is a base, hypocritical ——" Hold, Sir, if this is the effect of your ardent passion, it is sufficiently exemplified what kind of behaviour Lady Caroline would have received from her noble Colonel, had she been weak enough to marry him. "What does your Lordship mean to insinuate I should have proved a villain?" The action evidently evinces my meaning, exclusive of any further explanation, Colonel. "Your Lordship shall atone for your present insolent behaviour before to-morrow noon." I accept your challenge with pleasure, and with this assurance, that those who have justice and equity for companions may bid defiance to an infamous challenger. "By heaven, was it not for the belief I shall sufficiently

sufficiently satiate my revenge with your blood, I would this moment run you through." Vile miscreant! do you stile this behaviour an evident proof of bravery, or a cowardly action, to insult a gentleman, who has no other weapon but a conscience free from infamy? "I desire your Lordship will not forget to attend me at the appointed time." I shall think of it, Sir. And upon this he quitted the room. The behaviour I had received from this insulting being irritated and hurt me. Oh how inexpressibly did it hurt me I had promised Lady Caroline to avoid a duel, and, to fulfill my engagements of honour, had attended the Colonel without a sword. At my return home I found Lord Rivers waiting my arrival; he informed me that the Colonel was arrived, he also acquainted me that he had been to his house, but the servants denied his being in town. I did not wish to undeceive his Lordship, by intimating the most trivial hint I had seen him; as I was perfectly convinced Lord Rivers was of such a courageous disposition, and, though amiable to a degree, yet jealous of his family's honor beyond conception, to suffer me, should he arrive at the knowledge before the affair was terminated, to encounter the Colonel,

lonel, therefore I determined in adhering to the resolution I had formed, of ending the contest before any one was informed it was in agitation. It was a fortunate circumstance for me that I had settled this plan within my own breast; for had I been so void of understanding as to make Lord Rivers acquainted with the Colonel's artful proceedings, he would instantly have insisted on his prerogative of revenging an injured sister's cause, and accept the challenge instead of me; while I, actuated by principles founded on the firmest basis of honor, must have peremptorily rejected his kind proposal; this it is very possible would occasion a difference between us; and his Lordship, in the good intention of saving my life, would hasten to the place of appointment the following morning; where, in the firm hopes of obliging the vile challenger to solicit forgiveness, his zeal would throw reason off her guard, and by his impetuosity occasion his adversary to give him a mortal wound. The Earl his father would accuse me of treachery towards his son; Lady Caroline, whose esteem I revere more than the whole world, would reproach me for want of courage in her behalf; and before noon I should have been the topic of conversation.

sation in every coffee room about town. My reputation, which has hitherto remained unblemished from scandalous aspersions, would upon this occasion be called in question, and my disposition branded with that of coward; and to clear my character from the unjust imputations it had been charged with, to an infatuated world, I should have found myself involved in the disagreeable and painful necessity of fighting twenty duels instead of one, had I not permitted myself to be guided by prudence. All this I had maturely weighed and considered, and therefore suffered his Lordship to depart with assuring him the Colonel had not visited me as yet; which was true, he having sent for me. When my Lord was gone I began to settle my affairs, as it was quite uncertain who would triumph in the victory. The following morning I repaired to Hyde-park, where I waited half an hour before the Colonel made his appearance; and when he did it was with an air of agitation which evidently evinced the conscious emotion of his soul; it was apparent he strove to suppress it, that I might not observe the visible alteration. However, he preserved courage to talk of measuring the ground, which we agreed upon;

upon; we both drew our swords and parried each other; for some time victory seemed doubtful, till my sword scratched the Colonel's side, by an impulsive dictate to end the controversy, who instantly dropped his sword, exclaiming, By G-d I am wounded. I took it up, not with a victorious air of menace, but with a countenance expressive of sorrow for the accident, and returned it to him, with a desire to be informed whether he chose to decline any further altercation, or pursue his intentions? He looked for some time astonished, but when his utterance found vent he cried, You are a brave fellow, by G-d, Hamwick, but I won't let it pass, I must make another effort to recover my honor. I urged him to yield to my persuasions of retiring, but they proved ineffectual, as he was determined to try his dexterity once more. I repented that I had returned his sword, as I was apprehensive it would be attended with fatal consequences to him; however we began the second time, and the point of my adversary's sword was entering my left side, which must inevitably have entered my heart, when to my great surprise I saw it draw back by an involuntary motion. Casting my eyes on the Colonel's arm to discern

discern the motive, I saw a young gentleman struggling to wrest his sword from him. Struck by the action I concluded it was one of his relations who had received intimation of his intention, and was therefore trying to prevent any further mischief. But could you, or any one, guess my astonishment upon hearing the imaginary gentleman exclaiming, "No, worst of monsters, it was me you wished to injure—it was me who deceived you—he is free from blame, and I will resign my life before I suffer you to touch the Earl of Hamwick." At this speech the supposed gentleman fainted, and more people gathering round, obliged us to desist. But, gracious God! when the stranger was recovered, it appeared no other personage than Lady Caroline Rivers.—Yes, it was that inimitable woman who, to save me from impending danger, had risked her own life in the attempt. Oh, my friend, this last effort of her generous disposition has unalterably fixed me hers. And oh, Henrietta! what a load have I been obligated to sustain through your misplaced partiality. But if my fate is already destined to be the husband of Henrietta, why did I go abroad? Ah, why did not I marry her the instant the contract

contract was made? No, I was doomed to misery, and consigned the child of wretchedness. Ah, George! my sufferings are beyond the power of anticipation. Heavens! why was I recalled at this period to England? Why did I arrive at this critical moment? Why did I not guard my heart with adamant? Why regard her Ladyship's distressed situation with a sympathising eye of humanity? Oh, Henrietta! how little do you imagine the torment I receive from your love, which, instead of soothing as it ought the distressed agitation of my mind, will only embitter with harsh discontent every future moment of my life. What an unhappy unfortunate circumstance that ingratitude, that vile bane to friendship's effulgent rays, should gain the entire ascendancy over every intellectual? or why should I accuse Miss Hopkins as the cause of my unhappy fate, when it is Lady Caroline? But I must quit her, without suffering the compassionate guardian of my life to cast her benign influence over an involuntary adorer of her bewitching charms. From the time I spent in Italy I began to think my safety insured, and at first I flattered myself the esteem I cherished for Lady Caroline was founded on

her

her distress; but how vainly did I flatter myself. Yet it was not evident till Mr. Hopkins urged my marriage with his daughter; then, and not till then, did I discover the true situation of my heart; racked with excruciating pangs, torn with torments unutterable, it would have drew compassion from the breast of an infidel, had he known the tortures I endured when the proposal was made. But I will adhere to my father's commands, marry Henrietta, then quit this place, and leave Lady Caroline perhaps for ever; her kindness may teach me, aided by fortitude, to recover peace and serenity of which my unguarded heart has already beguiled me. The more I consider the necessity of a separation, the more repugnant to my soul appears the idea; the friendship Lord Rivers has evinced towards me, the disinterested generosity of Lady Caroline's disposition, the concern his Lordship has expressed for my future welfare, the solicitude the Earl has shown on every occasion to oblige me, and, to complete the volume of their assiduous attention, her Ladyship regarded her own life as invaluable to save mine. After all this, can I, dare I, trust myself to take leave of any belonging to this harmonious family?

No,

No, I must leave town without seeing them, otherwise the plan I have formed will prove abortive; therefore I must follow implicitly the dictates of reason, which command me to shun the sight of Lady Caroline, and avoid the society of her relations. Why did I quit Italy so precipitately? then had I not been exposed to such innumerable evils; evils which I must ever regret, because it excludes me from surmounting wretchedness. Yet I must make a glorious effort to subdue love, and reinstate reason in my breast; and to that end I have determined, while I remain in town, to make as few visits as possible at the Earl's, and strive to reconcile my mind towards Henrietta; therefore it is indubitable my next will inform you of the wretched situation of,

Your unfortunate,

HAMWICK.

LET-

LETTER THE TWENTIETH.

LADY LOUISA BEAUMONT TO THE
COUNTESS OF DELIFONT.

Berkley-Square.

I Arrived at the Earl's yesterday, and believe me, I have not received one happy moment since. The joy I experienced when on the journey, at the idea of beholding so soon my amiable friends, were allayed the instant I entered the house, by the appearance of Lord Rivers, who came to meet and conduct me to his sister's apartment. This assertion you will conclude is rather extraordinary from me, but it was the melancholy appearance he made, which entirely disconcerted my

my illusive ideas of happiness. The servants countenances expressed the sorrow they felt for their unfortunate mistress. His Lordship, pressing my hand to his lips, said, How good you are, my dear Lady Louisa! Thus he would have proceeded, but excess of grief stopt his utterance. My share of unutterable woe was to come. My Lord, conducting me to the door of Caroline's apartment, made a low bow, and retired in silence. The behaviour of his Lordship prepared me for an affecting reception, and I entered the room with the dejected air of a criminal preparing for execution. But Oh; my dear Madam, the interview I was obliged to sustain will ever be present to my imagination, and the sound of every accent that accompanied my dear Caroline's words still vibrates on my ears. On my entrance, I perceived my lovely friend reclined on a sofa; the beautiful bloom which had never till this period ceased to glow, had now forsook her animated cheeks, her sparkling eyes were closed, and apparently at first sight never to behold light more. Oh, my honoured Madam, reflect on the deplorable situation of your daughter at this moment, who but ill formed for the dismal scene,

was

was obliged to sustain the conflict which raged in her breast, in secret silence, and afford that consolation to her friend which herself stood so much in need of from another. Her woman was advancing with an intention of waking her Lady, but I prevented it, by desiring she would desist, as I wished her to receive a small share of alleviation from her sorrow, and myself a short relief from the grief that the sound of her voice would occasion. She started, and beckoning her servant, desired to be informed whether Lady Louisa was yet arrived? She was answered in the affirmative. And then, exclaiming with energy, Gracious God! I thank you for thus attending to the prayers of an unworthy mortal, in sending my dear Louisa, thus opportunely to my assistance; and then, starting from her seat, cried, Where is she? Lead me down stairs to my affectionate friend. I had placed myself at the further end of the room, that my sudden appearance might not alarm her too much. At sight of her rising, I hastened across the floor, but her drooping spirits, which had been already exhausted with fatigue of mind, were too weak for the conflict my presence had occasioned, and she swooned in my arms. Here was a moment which
required

required all my fortitude, and I was obliged to exert all my spirits to protect me from a similar situation with my distressed friend. On her recovery, she dismissed her woman, with the servants, who had been called to her assistance, and, clasping her arms round my neck, exclaimed, Oh, my Louisa! the imaginary dreams of happiness, I had formed, have already proved abortive and fallacious. Yes, my friend, the illusion is over indeed, and I will never give you cause to reproach me in such severe terms again. How miserably had I deceived myself, till the arrival of your long-wished and expected letter: It has effectually absorbed my doubts, nay, I have relinquished the very idea of the Earl's cherishing a partiality in favour of your unhappy Caroline. Ah, why did I permit my gratitude (though it was so justly excited) to gain the ascendancy over my heart? You dont answer me, Louisa. I know I am criminal in every sense of the word: Yet, you are my only hope, and must not regard me with an eye of abhorrence. I had hitherto remained in silent anguish; but when she pressed me in such moving terms, to afford her consolation and pity, I was no longer mistress of myself, but bursting into a flood of tears, answered her with,

with sighs. This is friendly of you indeed, Louisa, said she, to commiserate the sufferings of your friend with tears; but, though I know you have a heart to assist and succour the distressed, yet, I never entertained an idea you would grieve in this manner for me. But I must not suffer you to continue shedding tears: See here (putting her hand to her heart) is an example of fortitude and resignation. I have long since relinquished wet eyes. Come, I see I must inflict the troublesome task of teaching you perseverance on myself. I sent for you to reconcile my father and brother to their fate, when, in lieu of that, the perturbation you evince, will, instead of soothing their apprehensions, alarm and raise their doubts. By this time I had recovered the power of utterance so far as to reply. And, could you, my dear Caroline, harbour the suspicion that I entertained less affection for you than ever? Or, how could you form the idea that I was equal to the task of soothing your father and brother, at such an unfortunate moment, when I should stand in such absolute need of a consolator myself. But, compose yourself, my dear, your present indisposition proceeds from lowness and dejection of spirits. You are young, my

dear, there is no danger of your being
 snatched from your friends yet. Do you
 boast of a competent share of prescience,
 Louisa, and cannot foretell, that the ine-
 vitable moment which fixes the Earl ano-
 ther's, proclaims my quick dissolution?
 Banish such ridiculous imaginations from
 your thoughts, my dear Caroline, and trust
 to my prescience for a speedy recovery. —
 No, Louisa, if I trust to such a contin-
 gency, it will guide me wrong. You wish
 to recover and prolong the term of my
 former genuine tranquillity. Your ideas
 have pointed out a method to preserve my
 already broken peace of mind, but indeed,
 I am not susceptible of receiving consol-
 ation now, nor neither am I callous against
 the exhortation of my kind friends. Yet,
 my situation is inexplicable to the Earl,
 and let the secret be buried in oblivion for
 ever. You have a compassionate heart,
 my dear Louisa, and sympathising humani-
 ty, which cannot be paralleled. But, let
 the sad duties you are about to perform for
 a friend, be the completion of your mi-
 sery. You appear irresolute, my dear, but
 suffer my intreaties to conquer your irre-
 solutions. Will you promise me Louisa?
 What would Caroline wish her friend to
 promise? I returned, You appear dis-
 satisfied,

fatisfied, my dear, said she. Can you think it possible for me to be otherwise than dissatisfied, when my only friend wishes to exact such an undue compliance? She was going to reply when the servant summoned me to dinner. I had not seen the Earl, therefore I quitted Lady Caroline's room, and was met on the stairs by Lord Rivers, who apologized for his awkward behaviour on my arrival; but, continued he, Lady Louisa is all condescension, and the situation of her friend will plead in my behalf, in her Ladyship's generous mind.— I assured him there was no occasion for an apology, and he led me into the dining-parlour, where the Earl was seated. He arose on my entrance, and his son cried, Here, my Lord, is the only female who can support Caroline under her present affliction. The Earl, affectionately embracing, welcomed me to Berkley-square, but expressed his uneasiness at the occasion of it. After the servants were withdrawn, the Earl informed me, that my amiable friend had been delirious, and in her lucid intervals talked in an incoherent manner of the Earl of Hamwick, declaring her partiality in his favor, and protesting, not to outlive his marriage with another. This, continued the Earl, has caused both

me and Charles infinite sorrow, because we are well acquainted with his prior engagements to Miss Hopkins, and therefore, the only feasible plan I can direct in such an emergency, is under the pretence of shewing Lady Louisa every place of polite resort, to oblige Caroline to accompany her Ladyship. This they were both of opinion would be the only means to recover her former vivacity. After a short discourse, to this purpose, they conducted me back to my friend's room, where we began some diverting subject to raise her spirits, but our repeated efforts proved ineffectual, for she was not to be diverted. When they retired, I questioned her concerning the Colonel, if he were arrived? She replied in the affirmative, and a duel had ensued. I eagerly enquired how it was terminated? She replied, according to the information she had gave me of her intentions, she had dressed herself in man's apparel, and followed the Earl to the coffee-house, where she overheard all that had passed from an adjoining apartment, and likewise that the duel was to ensue the following morning. She went to Hyde Park, where the Colonel's sword was on the point of ending the Earl's life she; had prepared a dagger for the occasion, that if her deli-

verer

verer had been so unfortunate as to lose his life in her cause, her full intention was to plunge it in the detested monster's heart.— However, on approaching, the dear girl perceived what imminent danger threatened the Earl, and, quickening her pace, arrived just time enough to save him from the rapacious hand of the insulting Colonel, by catching the arm which held the sword. It began to grow late, and, people gathering round, the Earl offered his carriage and conveyed her safe home. Since this, no entreaties from either father or brother, could prevail on her to see any one, except her noble deliverer. Indeed, my dear madam, it is with the utmost concern, I see her future life depends on the Earl's choice. In vain do I reason—in vain strive to paint the preposterous absurdity of a fixed determination. This morning the Earl of Hamwick was announced. At mention of his well known name, her cheeks, animated by a conscious blush, resumed their former vermillion glow, and in a moment was overspread with a deadly pale. She arose, though scarce capable to support her trembling limbs, and, taking my hand, said, permit me, Lady Louisa to introduce you to the Earl of Hamwick, a gentleman who rescued your friend from the usurper's

bondage; and turning to the Earl, said, with a degree of emotion, Lady Louisa Beaumont is the friend, my Lord, whose arrival has been so anxiously expected. His Lordship paid me a compliment on the friendship that subsisted between Lady Caroline and me, adding, he would lay down his life with pleasure, would her Ladyship evince half the sollicitude for his death, she had done for my arrival. Oh, my Lord! she replied, (with an eagerness that ought to have been suppressed) you have a right, indeed I wish,—Here she hesitated, and was apparently confused, not knowing what to say. What does Lady Caroline wish? he repeated, striving to penetrate into the inmost recesses of her soul.—Would to Heaven I were worthy to be made acquainted with every wish your heart could form? With what earnestness would I strive to anticipate every disagreeable sensation that might arise within your generous breast. There is no young creature said my amiable friend, (recollecting herself) and striving to appear composed, who so earnestly wishes to receive instruction as I do. It is but a short time I have been accustomed to guide my unwary steps in the paths of fashion's dissipating allurements; yet, I have, on every occasion, sedulously

duloussly avoided the malignant aspersions of scandal's unlicensed tongue. My father, fully satisfied of my innocence of heart, resigned me to the guidance of my own discretion; but much happier had I been, at this moment, had he asserted a rigid father's aspect, and kept me immured within the close recesses of a country mansion's walls. Oh, Lady Caroline, you distress my mind by your discourse. Your father and brother have not a wish but what is centered in your happiness, how then could they form the cruel idea of consecrating your future days to retirement's solitary devotion. But, happy had it been for the generality of my sex had the Earl of Hockinstone acceded to your present wishes, or even before I was so happy and unfortunate to behold his amiable daughter. What, has your Lordship repented already? replied Caroline, (gathering courage, and fresh animation, from this mysterious speech of the Earl's) I am apprehensive from present appearances, I shall receive sufficient reason to repent my past conduct. Heavens! what can this unaccountable discourse allude to? Your Lordship, surely, cannot entertain apprehensions of the base Colonel's malignant inventions still? Be assured, Lady Caro-

line, the Colonel's inventions were the most distant from my imagination. Had I not more to dread from the impulsive dictates of beauty's allurements, short and transitory would be the apprehensions I at this moment endure; yet, my present fears, will, in the termination, be too fatally and cruelly verified in the eternal duration of everlasting misery. What does this unintelligible, mysterious conversation of your Lordship's tend to? replied her Ladyship, striving to suppress ungovernable emotions, blended with the starting tear; if it is any thing propriety wishes to preserve inviolable, do not, by a deviation from the rule of such a noble monitor, wish to divulge the most trivial circumstance. Lady Caroline commands, and I obey, replied this amiable man, who, but young in years, yet, to appearance, has, by youthful inexperience, been unwarily drawn into the ensnaring labyrinth of trouble and misfortunes. Come, interrupted I, the conversation of both has been inexplicable to an indifferent person, as yet, therefore follow my counsel, and make yourselves intelligible to each other. I would not wish you to neglect my kind prescriptions, because they were derived from the mind of a person you may think too young for judicious ideas.

ideas. After the report I have heard of your Ladyship's prudence and magnanimity, it would be criminal to accuse the failure of prescience in you. And I should be happy were I at liberty to render myself intelligible to Lady Louisa, but my ill-fated stars have ordained I should keep secret what, for my future tranquillity of mind, ought to be revealed. At the conclusion of this speech, which was delivered with a frankness that charmed me beyond conception, his Lordship was rising to depart, but the entrance of her Ladyship's father, obliged him to take his seat once more. The discourse happening to turn on company, the Earl of Hockinstone desired the Earl of Hamwick would favour us with his company to-morrow evening, and desired, at the same time, Lady Caroline and myself would put ourselves in a dress suitable to receive a few friends. I assented to the proposal, but my melancholy friend wished to decline it. Her father and I persisted strenuously in the request, and the Earl adding his solicitations, at last prevailed. After his departure, the Earl of Hockinstone told me he wished to be made acquainted with the true state of my heart, and therefore I must not use any deception to disguise it. This sudden and unexpected

examination startled me, and I exclaimed, Good God! I don't understand you my Lord. No, why then I must make myself more intelligible, I find; but I make no doubt the Countess of Delifont has already been informed of my son's prepossessions in your favour. Indeed I don't know how to interpret your Lordship's discourse. Come, come, Louisa, don't affect stupidity, that blush don't become you just now, child, you must throw off the boarding school miss, now, and prepare for a husband. Do, pray, my dear Lady Caroline, speak to your father, he is really too facetious at my expence—it is quite unpardonable. You must endure it Louisa. Indeed my father wishes to render my brother happy in the marriage state, with a person who is every way so worthy as my amiable friend. Indeed Caroline you are as bad as the Earl, and if my conjectures do not prove fallacious, you are joined in league against me, therefore I must be very circumspect, otherwise a discovery will ensue. Well said, Louisa, cried the Earl, what, have I detected the little abashed girl already? But don't blush, I tell you again, sincerity endears you to me, and a discovery is very requisite at present, my dear. It is very amazing, my Lord,

you

you still persist. I hope your Ladyship will not be offended, but I persist on the strength of your own words. Excuse my want of thought, my Lord, I replied, scarce knowing what I spoke; but what have I said? Sufficient to convince me a discovery would ensue, he returned archly. It is very well, my Lord, but I endure your raillery in the belief it was meant to divert my desponding friend. I see I must assume a serious countenance, otherwise we shall never arrive at an eclaircissement. You are to be informed, the Duke of Delmore made propasals to me, concerning Charles, in behalf of his eldest daughter, but I rejected them, in hopes of your alliance, which I would prefer before the whole nobility. I easily conceived the Earl wished me to be explicit, and I replied, An alliance with the Earl of Hockinstone's family, I am not surpris'd that every person of distinction should wish to aspire to, as it reflects honour on every one who is, or may be related to it. But suffer my timidity to plead a sufficient excuse with your Lordship, if I decline returning a decisive answer, till you apply to my mother, by whose concurrence my choice shall be guided. Not waiting a reply, I arose and walked to the window, covered

with shame and confusion.—The Earl left the room, and soon after Lord Rivers made his appearance; he very tenderly enquired after his sister's health, then, coming to the window, which I had not yet quitted, said, How kind are you, Lady Louisa, and how affectionately does it evince the friendship you have ever expressed for my dear sister, thus to confine and deny yourself every pleasing enjoyment, for the less insatuating charm of soothing another person's cares! How very few Ladies are there in this age of degeneracy and dissipation that are capable of resigning pleasure's potent allurements, to calm the perturbation which rages with uncommon violence in a friend's mind. The embarrassment and confusion I felt on his Lordship's approach, so soon after the discourse with his father, insensibly, and almost imperceptibly wore away, when I found he forbore to mention his passion, and I replied, with great composure, I thought it an indispensable duty upon every one, to soothe, and, if possible, alleviate the conflict, even in the mind of an entire stranger; and how much more should they strive to quell the cares which arise in the bosom of a friend? That, for my part, it was a task I had ever performed with pleasure, and though
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in the commencement it might appear difficult, yet I had never entertained an idea to relinquish a claim where perseverance could accomplish a happy victory. How charming are your sentiments, Lady Louisa, but I ought not to have expected any other but what agrees with the most refined judgment and solid sense, to escape the lips of such an amiable friend; would I were permitted and entitled at this moment to call you by a more endearing and affectionate name than that of friend. While uttering the last sentence he observed me with looks of the utmost attention — but Lord Rivers is not only amiable in his person, he possesses a delicate sensibility of mind I never saw equalled in one of his sex; for perceiving my confusion increase with his observation, he very judiciously added, Indeed your Ladyship must excuse me, yet I find myself under the necessity of informing you that I cannot, nor will not, permit you to be immured in this room continually; I find, continued he laughing, if my father does not exert his authority, and insist on your appearance below, you will return into the country with your health impaired by perpetual confinement; and, should an
 accident

accident of that kind happen, we dare not presume a second time to solicit the Countess's permission for your appearance in Berkley-square; and though I am confident nothing affords my sister such infinite satisfaction as the soothing and enlivening conversation of the charming Lady Louisa, yet I must consult the future happiness of your friends in this one circumstance, and not impute my motive to self-interestness either, when I declare my resolution is not to suffer you to remain long a novice in the amusements we pursue while in town. "But, my Lord, don't you imagine the Countess will evince her displeasure at a conduct so unlicensed, as that of pointing out the path of dissipation and extravagance for the track her daughter should pursue?" No, my fair monitor, the Countess cannot evince her displeasure, I am positive, on such an occasion, when it is with a view of adding fresh animation to the mind, and prevent melancholy ideas to occur, which will be very frequent if my sister continues in her present lingering situation. "So, to dispel melancholy, your Lordship would adopt riot and late hours as an essential remedy." No, your Ladyship has mistaken me, I
recom-

recommend pleasure as a softner to the mind ; but not to be always in pursuit of it, because that injures a person's constitution in a much greater degree than absenting themselves entirely from its call ; I would wish to advise every one to regard pleasure as a dangerous companion, if you persevere in too great an intimacy ; but an amiable and enlivening friend if kept at a proper distance. For instance, did you ever hear of a person who secluded himself from the world discourse with that agreeable familiarity so common to those who reside in it, and use pleasure occasionally ? Undoubtedly, the Hermit may have acquired much more sense by reading than most men, yet his sentiments are delivered in such an austere manner that, instead of affording the auditors a pleasing satisfaction of attending to his discourse, it disgusts and palls the mind against listening to any future conversation, however interesting to human kind. Your Ladyship may imagine it almost incredible, yet it is the same in the wide circle of caprice and fashion. If a lady or gentleman cannot support a conversation concerning every place of public amusement, they are regarded as unworthy
of

of the company of the polite class; and therefore it is absolutely requisite that you should shine at the opera. "But why at the opera, my Lord, in preference to an introduction at home?" Oh, no, that would not be consistent with politeness, nor either would I wish it. The Earl has invited a few of the nobility to-morrow evening, with the intention of introducing your Ladyship to them. "And was it with that view alone, my Lord?" It was with that view, and a desire of bringing Caroline once more into company. "If it is with the view of her Ladyship's recovering her former gaiety, I consent to your Lordship's opera scheme if my dear friend will accompany me." There is not the most distant doubt but my sister will; however to ensure success, with your Ladyship's permission, we will gain her consent now. Then taking my hand, led me to the sofa where my dear Caroline was sitting, and seating himself between us he told her we had been forming a plan, but she must give her honor to comply with his request before she was informed of any thing further. She promised faithfully she would. But will you, sister, positively? Why should you doubt my honor, brother?

ther? There spoke my sister; but to-morrow evening, which is opera night, you receive company, therefore we will defer that with your approbation, Lady Louisa, till the ensuing evening. I bowed assent, while Lady Caroline cried, How! the opera did you say? Certainly, my dear, I intend doing myself the honor to accompany Lady Louisa and my sister to —. I am obliged to you, brother, but my company must be dispensed with. You would not wish to debar your amiable friend of such a trifling amusement, and Lady Louisa has absolutely declined favoring me with her company unless you chuse to accompany her. Yes, to oblige me, she will comply I know. I declared I would not think of going without her, and at last we prevailed so far as to gain a compliance, and then I retired to dress.— But indeed, my dear Madam, I was terrified beyond conception on my arrival at the visible alteration of our friend, and I am confident her existence is of no longer duration than the Earl's single state. His marriage is inevitable, therefore I wish to get my dear Caroline into the country before Miss Hopkins becomes the bride in reality of the only man the dear girl could ever

ever like. But, till my return is fixed,
believe me to be, honored Madam,

Your dutiful daughter,

LOUISA BEAUMONT.



LETTER THE TWENTY-FIRST.

LADY LOUISA BEAUMONT.

(*In Continuation.*)

Berkley Square,

Honoured Madam,

IN pursuance to your commands, I have prevailed on myself to delineate the characters of our guests, for your inspection, and shall proceed to give them, by informing you, that on the day Lady Caroline received this, or any party for the first time since the Colonel's clandestine elopement with her, we prepared for their reception rather earlier than usual, on account of my introduction. About eight o'clock some of the visitants made their appearance,

appearance, and amongst the first was the Earl of Hamwick, ever assiduous to evince his attention, as Lord Rivers has informed me, towards my amiable friend, yet incapacitated from offering his heart a voluntary sacrifice at her adorable shrine. At nine Lady Honoria, Lady Lavinia, and Lady Calista Evramond, daughters of the Duke of Delmore, made their appearance. I must be very concise in the description of these three ladies, on account of the negociation concerning an alliance between their family and the Earl of Hockinstone's. Lady Honoria, who is the eldest, is tall and genteel, but not handsome; yet possesses such an agreeable, expressive countenance, animated by a lively penetrating wit, that her conversation is fascinating to the highest degree; and though her raillery is in general pointed at those with whom she is familiar, they cannot but be charmed with it, because it is delivered in conjunction with such delicate sentiments; and her disposition is of that amiable nature, which will not permit her to pay attention to any malignant aspersion to the prejudice of her most inveterate enemies, if they are not present to confront their accusers. This happy turn of
mind

mind insures her the respect and esteem of her own sex, while it excites the sincere love and admiration of the opposite. I must confess, though her Ladyship is such a dangerous rival, I was charmed and delighted with her behaviour the whole evening. Lavinia is of the middle stature, her shape beautifully formed; but how shall I describe her enchanting face, which attracts the adoration of every male being in the room, when her Ladyship condescends to honor any one with her company; but, fortunately for the male sex, she has adopted such a strange contrariety of ideas to predominate over and oblivate every virtue that would, with her permission, shine forth conspicuous to adorn her lovely person, by mistaking impertinent affectation for delicate sensations, and low bred familiarity for genuine politeness. Conscious of her personal charms, by a perpetual retinue of flatterers, she disdains as unworthy her observation, or beneath her native dignity, to add one single adornment to her mind; but is sufficiently gratified in gaining an ascendancy over the hearts of those injudicious gentlemen who are insensibly in pursuit of their own ruin, for Lady Lavinia is a most dangerous coquette; and, to add to the
 portrait

portrait of a divine woman rendered truly ridiculous through a capricious system of behaviour, her discourse is incomprehensible, by repeated efforts to evince affectation has a more than competent share in every contemptible action, to display her imaginary exalted consequence. Lady Calista is not so tall as her eldest sister, nor so short as Lady Lavinia, rather awkward in her make and carriage; her face is what most people in general term pretty, but a vulgar form in my opinion; her Ladyship is free from her sister's despicable affectation, yet preserves a low pride in the character of a court bigot, and retains so much of the ancient ceremonies, that, was I not perfectly convinced to the contrary, I should imagine she was some clearstarcher's daughter displaying her new acquired airs to the best advantage. The title of Lady added to Louisa ensured me a kind reception with Lady Calista, and I experienced the exquisite, or more properly speaking unfortunate, honor of occupying a seat by her calendar Ladyship the whole evening. And to convince you, my dear Madam, I have not deviated from the most trivial circumstance of truth, I will give you a specimen of the conversation which ensued:—Has your Ladyship
 been

been in town before? My answer was in the negative. I am extremely concerned at this disagreeable piece of intelligence, because your Ladyship has not had the pleasure of enjoying the agreeable conversation of the first nobility, for it is seldom they retire for the summer season so far as Norfolk. I assured her ours was a very genteel neighbourhood, and in the course of our residence we had formed the most enviable connections, as you always made a point of honoring those with your esteem who had merit to plead in their behalf. Your Ladyship must excuse me, but merit is a mere bauble at present that no person of consequence thinks worthy their pursuit; family ancestry is the most essential point, believe me. So I perceive, returned I, smiling at her ignorant bigotry. Your Ladyship's family has the honor of a very ancient lineage, I have been informed, and I declare nothing gives me such exquisite delight as the honor of your acquaintance. Lady Calista's friendship is an honor I must strive to merit. Well, continued her Ladyship, your politeness evidently evinces your rank; but when we are, though it is very seldom, in company with commoners, their gross familiarity is beyond endurance; for my part I am astonished,
and

and very often compel myself to perform the disagreeable task of arguing with Lady Honoria for frequenting the family of any one but what are nobly descended. Your Ladyship's remarks are very just I confess; but Lady Honoria's compassionate disposition is worthy imitation, because were you to select for acquaintance only such as were nobly descended, I am apprehensive your levees from numerous would become very thinly attended. That is very true, Lady Louisa, but my sister does not proceed upon such principles as yours; her Ladyship imagines familiarity, even with the lower class of people, is affability, and I am very confident those who are equal to herself in dignity must absolutely despise her for entertaining such low born conceptions; I declare if it was not for the trouble I perpetually take to support our family dignity, it would be depreciated to a level with some new titled Baronets. At the conclusion of this speech Lady Lavinia perceiving a seat vacant by me, approached it with all the affected airs vanity could bestow, and, seating herself in a languid posture, exclaimed, Heaven be praised! I protest I am quite out of breath; how the creatures torment one! that Lord Delville is a
 most

most wicked wretch. Bless me, rejoined Lady Calista, I am petrified at the idea your Ladyship should have any communication with the grandson of a citizen; I am surpris'd you have no more regard for the honor of yourself and family. Lard, sister, how you torment one! if the poor souls will speak to me, how can I help it? it would be cruel to deny them an answer; but I have set myself by Lady Louisa Beaumont to mortify the creatures, and they won't come nigh her while Lord Rivers remains in the room. I pretended not to hear this unpleasant raillery, and her Ladyship continued; Lard, it is amazing extraordinary the men folks will tire my patience with their assiduous attention to me in preference to any other woman; I wish, addressing herself to me, your Ladyship would set your cap at some of them, for really I shall be worried to death this winter if you won't oblige me. I returned my thanks to her Ladyship for the favor intended, but must solicit her permission to decline such a disadvantageous offer, as I should despair of conquering, or leading in my chains, any of Lady Lavinia Evrymond's suitors, while her Ladyship retained such an unsurmountable ascendancy over every one who had the

honor of her acquaintance. Well, I protest you are as great a flatterer as any of the tribe; Lard! there's that horrid monster Sir John Melrose; do you know the wretch has the presumption to assert I am vain of my charms, nay, he had the audacity to tell me I have no accomplishments. Sir John's behaviour is preposterous indeed, returned I, striving to suppress a laugh. Oh shocking behaviour! Well, you creature, where have you been? addressing herself to Sir John. Been? returned he with a shrug of the shoulders, seeking some new beauty; is your Ladyship satisfied? No, where did you find the wretch at last? eagerly enquired her Ladyship. In Covent-garden, returned Sir John, with a look of frigid indifference. What at a bagnio I suppose? Faith your Ladyship has touch'd the mark. Oh, you fulsome coxcomb, replied she, reddening with anger, your sight is odious to me. If your Ladyship would be advised, you would shut your eyes, and then the devil's in it if you could see me. Do for heaven sake, Lady Louisa, send this man away, or I shall certainly faint. Ah, your Ladyship is now ready to die with the spleen, because I am not fool enough to flatter your caprice and affectation; but,

but, believe me, if you were to faint I would not take the trouble of leading you to the window, for fear the infection should fall on some innocent damsel passing by; and now pray what do you think of me? Go, you bear, I protest I won't speak to you for a week. Well, to mortify your Ladyship, suppose I stretch it to a fortnight, and make you eat humble pie on the stool of repentance for three weeks. Ridiculous conception! do you imagine I have no other lover but you? Foolish idea! do you think I ever evinced any love for you? Lard! don't your Ladyship think the wretch is void of every tender sensation? Indeed I should imagine so by Sir John's frigid indifference to your Ladyship's charms. Well, I protest you are not acquainted with him; it is only out of bravado, because I chose to be sprightly with Lord Delvile, positively. You must not interfere, Lady Louisa, replied Sir John, winking significantly at me; Lavinia is my pupil, and I am determined to make her obey my commands. Lavinia — hum — How dare you assume such liberty? returned her Ladyship, throwing herself into a hundred different and affected attitudes. Cry your mercy, my Lady, your most obedient; and, turn-

ing on his heel, away walked Sir John. That fellow's rudeness is unbearable; positively then I will not endure such monstrous impudence! I really believe he regards me as one of the common quality, just as if I could not get a gallant any time of the day; but the creature's fashionable, and thinks he has an undoubted right to use me like other people, but I'll mortify him. Here cards were proposed by the company, and their *Ladyship sisters* walked away. I declined playing, and Lord Rivers approaching, said, Will not Lady Louisa reproach me for want of attention this evening? Apologies are unnecessary, returned I laughing, my neighbours have not been deficient in affording me entertainment and diversion sufficient, I can assure your Lordship. It is as I apprehended, your Ladyship entertains the same contemptuous opinion of them as the world has always done. Oh, no, your Lordship must pardon me, the ladies demand my sincere compassion for a prevalent weakness, and not a contemptuous disdain for inherent folly. Your humanity, in regarding with an eye of partiality the imperfections of their dispositions, which so justly excites ridicule, and vulnerates them with censure from every one,
far

far exceeds my most sanguine expectation, but I believe you have not conversed with Lady Honoria yet. No, my Lord, but I have observed sufficient of her behaviour, to confirm me in the opinion I entertained of her Ladyship's disposition the moment she entered the room. And will not Lady Louisa term my enquiries impertinent, should I put my boldness to the test, and ask what her opinion is? Oh, my Lord, can you ask me, after beholding Lady Honoria one moment? The chearful vivacity which animates her expressive countenance, must surely determine any one, however difficult in their choice, in favor of Lady Honoria. Would to Heaven her sisters would imitate such an inimitable example? They must, if they had your Ladyship for a tutorefs; but the amiable portrait you have drawn, is very apropos to the commencement of a never ending friendship, Lady Honoria having conceived as strong a partiality in your favor, and desires no other distinction than to merit your esteem. My esteem, blended with a love of her exemplary conduct, has already imperceptibly stole on my mind, in behalf of her ladyship's affability and condescension, and I shall regard myself honoured with her acquaintance. I sincerely

believe Lady Honoria and you were formed for sisters; but you must oblige me, by giving your comments on the behaviour of the two sisters. If I must not disguise the real sentiments of my mind, I think Lady Calista is too vain of her rank in life, but that does not exempt her from the possession of an amiable disposition. Yes, but I have repeatedly heard it remarked, that those people who are so proud of their family connexions, cannot be the inheritors of an excellent disposition; and the reason assigned for it is this, they foolishly imagine their exalted station fixes them far above the level of their equals, and this imagination, if permitted to remain without a check, occasions a disdainful haughtiness in their temper which cannot be removed; and to those who are their inferiors, in point of family, fortune, or title, they are downright insolent. This I have observed, though not without pity, is the unhappy situation of Lady Calista's absurd disposition. Then, according to your Lordship's penetration, Lady Lavinia's character is the most consistent with human life. No, far from it, Lady Lavinia has too much affectation, mixed with insolent familiarity, to render her an object worthy respect. But, could her Ladyship dispense with

with affectation's pernicious maxims; and, at the expence of half her fulsome familiarity, purchase a small share of her younger sister's pride, she would be a most inimitable woman; while Lady Calista, with half her sister's familiarity, would invite the attention of judicious men, which her pride at present sets at defiance. It is a great misfortune she should suffer her pride to gain such a compleat ascendancy over every other faculty; for really her Ladyship is what may be called a pretty woman. She is allowed to be nigh as handsome as Lady Lavinia, and the Duke has received several advantageous offers in her behalf; but Lady Calista has thought proper to refuse them on account of the gentleman's family connexions, therefore no one thinks proper to make any more proposals to either of the two. Lady Honoria is shortly to be united to a Marquis, descended from one of the first families in the kingdom.—This intelligence I received from his Lordship, gave me exquisite pleasure, as it confirmed me in the belief, her attachment for Lord Rivers could not be founded on the most firm basis. When the company broke up, her Ladyship came to the end of the room where I was seated, and tapping his Lordship on the shoulder

with her fan, desired to know, whether her commands had been strictly obeyed? He replied in the affirmative, adding, he had received the agreeable, but not unexpected satisfaction, to understand, that Lady Louisa entertained a reciprocal affection for her extraordinary merit, and wished for no one thing so earnestly, as the continuance of her Ladyship's favorable opinion. At the conclusion of this speech, Lady Honoria, turning to me with a most enchanting smile, that would have subdued even a Hydra, cried, Am I then so fortunately happy, Lady Louisa, to enjoy the pleasing satisfaction of your friendship? I assured her that the idea of being ranked among the number of those she expressed a friendship for, gave me the most sincere pleasure, and I would ever evince the partiality I retained for her, in every future moment of my life. You are a most charming disposition, Lady Louisa, and answer the description Lord Rivers and Lady Caroline gave me. But I was not acquainted with your Ladyship, and I confess, my giddy imagination led me to believe, that in the character of a friend and lover, you might appear more amiable in their eyes, than to the rest of the world, therefore I prepared myself for an interview with a person who was not possessed

essed with half the merit that ocular demonstration convinces me your Ladyship inherits. I thanked her for the compliment, and, after promising to call the next morning, the three sisters took their leave, and we retired to rest. — According to promise, the ladies paid us a visit the following morning, and I assure you, my dear Madam, the oftener Lady Honoria makes her appearance, the greater pleasure I enjoy, while the presence of her sisters creates painful sensations, by their disgusting behaviour. After their departure, the Earl of Hamwick came to pay his respects to our Ladyships; but I am perfectly convinced his regard for my friend is unalterably fixed, and his painful endeavours to conceal the emotion of his mind evidently evinces his attachment to be sincere. —

Lord Rivers happened to name Miss Hopkins to the Earl, as a young Lady endued with every accomplishment requisite to form an amiable woman, and, instead of heightening the encomiums his friend had bestowed on his destined bride, the Earl said he had been informed of her worth by numbers, but the multiplicity of business since his return to England, had engaged him from observing the lady's conduct and behaviour in person. Don't you think,

my dear Madam, this speech was incomprehensible to us, but the cool manner in which it was spoke, rendered it still more inexplicable, that his sentiments of Miss Hopkins should be so inconsistently opposite to the preparations her family are making for the marriage, and, at the same time, he never intimates the most distant wish to oppose it; and then, the multiplicity of business has never occasioned his absence from Berkley Square, one day, since his first arrival in town. When he withdrew, Lord Rivers followed him to the carriage, and Lady Caroline took that opportunity of breaking forth into the following ejaculation:—Heaven preserve and defend his heart from the excruciating pangs of unrequited love! Oh, may he never have cause to experience the torture my mind at this moment endures! May he be blessed in the love of the woman his soul adores, and may they both live for many years in uninterrupted tranquillity, which no time, absence, or artifice can ever efface. Ah, unhappy fate! the once happy Caroline will voluntarily devote her wretched life a sacrifice, to render her kind deliverer's bliss compleat. At the end of this, turning herself to me, who had been attentively listening to her generous petition, asked, whether

whether I really thought the Earl had a sincere regard for his destined bride? I replied in the affirmative, as her father and brother had desired I would, if Caroline should put the question to me. Well, she returned, with seeming resignation, I will pray for the life of Miss Hopkins both night and day, while transitory existence confines my soul to earth. Here the servant entered, with a letter from Lady Rake, which the dear girl kissed an hundred times before she had power to break the seal. But what were her joyful sensations, when she read the intelligence, that her Ladyship was preparing for her return to England? Then, said she, I shall see my Harriot once more, before excess of grief, heightened by accumulated misfortunes, has power to close my eyes. Oh, my dear Harriot, you, I well know, will sympathise in every distress I have been involved in, your kind heart is a receptacle wherein I may confide my every anguish. Yes, you have experienced what misfortune is, and will condole with me in every affecting scene I recite,—Yes, Harriot knows the pangs a heart, ill at unison with itself, endures, when despairing love is added to the end.—The agitated contrariety of ideas that rushed upon her mind at this instant

were too much for her weak frame to encounter, and she fell into a fit. Indeed, my dear madam, thus situated, it is impossible for you to imagine the fatigue of mind with which I labour to support my own spirits, on such a trying occasion, that Caroline may not perceive my dejection. She continued in fits an hour, and when recovered, was put to bed, where, after she had remained a short time, she asked me if that was not the day fixed for the opera? I replied, no, but I had relinquished the thoughts of going, while she continued so poorly. Your compassion is unequalled, my dear Louisa, but I must insist upon your going with my brother. And do you really imagine, my dear Caroline, that I am so void of humanity, as to take any pleasure, while you are confined to your room? She urged me very much to go, but I resolutely refused to comply with her entreaties, and when Lord Rivers came into the room, I signified my intentions of keeping her Ladyship company the next evening. His Lordship expressed his surprise, but I determined to adhere to the resolution I had formed, and he acquiesced, after a fruitless solicitation to obtain my consent. When the physician called, I followed him down stairs, to learn his

his opinion, which he assured me was, that medicine would have no effect upon Lady Caroline, as her complaint was occasioned by a disease of the mind more than the body; and, if it was not speedily removed, would terminate her existence. He desired we would introduce her into company as much as possible, as that would, in some measure, retard life. We are all very unhappy; but I must conclude this, from your dutiful daughter,

LOUISA BEAUMONT.



LET.

LETTER THE TWENTY-SECOND.

THE COUNTESS OF DELIFONT TO
LADY LOUISA BEAUMONT.

Goodwill-Hall.

MY dear Louisa, I have just received your second letter, and it has occasioned unspeakable concern on my mind, that your amiable friend continues in the doubtful situation you describe; and I am confident, at the same time, your own, which is so tenderly susceptible of a friend's distress, suffers in a more severe manner than you think proper to confess to me. But attend, my dear, to a mother who sues to her child, and entreats her not to permit sorrow, that bane to futurity, to find too secure a harbour within her generous breast, nor think me interested by selfish motives, when

when I desire my only child to suffer pleasing emotions, alternately with compassion for her fair friend's misfortunes, to take possession of her soul. Consider, my Louisa, should the all-merciful creator think proper to summons Lady Caroline before his tribunal, the Earl of Hockinstone has yet another pledge to console him, in the person of Lord Rivers. Whereas, should my child, absorbed in grief, turn a deaf ear to every remonstrance of the woman who painfully bore her, and by exquisite feelings, fall a prey to death's dire sickle, think, and reflect on the tortures which must for ever, attend the miserable days of your inconsolable mother. I admire the sentiments of Lord Rivers, in regard to pleasure, which he delivers in terms that cannot be contradicted with propriety, nor neither would I wish to debar my child from any innocent amusement; but, I would recommend to her moments of solid reflection, that the approbation of a worthy few, ought to be far more acceptable to a female who aspires to an amiable dignity, than the fulsome flattery and admiration of a giddy and numerous multitude. It grieves me to think, yet, so true it is, that small, very small, is the number of those who have sufficient remains

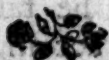
of

of a sagacious judgment to distinguish those who are really praise worthy. But, while dreary and dismal ideas are encouraged to propagate themselves on the mind of my gentle Louisa, I will extend my efforts in striving to alleviate, for a few moments, those disagreeable sensations, by informing her, that Mrs. Wood and her husband are, once more, restored to happiness, and the family, which were lately rendered conspicuous for extremity of wretchedness, is, at this present moment, distinguished by the more eligible name of harmonious. You will be surprised, my dear, that a person of such an impetuous, unforgiving disposition as Mr. Holman, should ever be persuaded to speak to, or, in short, see his daughter, after such a mark of disobedience. But the affair is thus: After your departure, Mr. Holman was seized with the gout in his stomach; his wife, who you know had quitted his house from the time of her daughter's elopement, took this favourable opportunity of entreating the physician, who attended her husband, to inform him that his situation was dangerous, and, by that innocent stratagem, prevail on him to forgive, and receive Mrs. Wood once more into favor. The attempt succeeded beyond

yond the most sanguine expectations, for Mr. Holman, struck with bitter remorse for the unpardonable barbarity he had been guilty of towards his child, yielded to the doctor's (scarce to be termed) solicitations, at the first mention of her almost forgotten name, and desired, that his wife and daughter, with the captain, might be immediately sent for. Mrs. Wood and her husband happened to be on a visit to her mother at the critical moment which was to determine the state of their future lives.— They repaired to the house directly, and were received with a parental fondness. The next morning Mr. Holman was surprisingly recovered, and his wife, daughter, and son-in-law, have remained with him ever since. In short, he has expressed a much greater partiality for his daughter, since her return, than I ever remembered him to evince before her marriage; nor neither will he take the air without Captain Wood accompanies him. This teaches us how capricious human nature is, in this one instance of foolish obstinacy.— In your first (if I am not mistaken) you mentioned a conversation that passed between you and the Earl of Hockinstone, concerning your alliance with his family; I have received proposals from the Earl,
in

in his son's name, and, as I am perfectly convinced your partiality for Lord Rivers soars above the limited bounds of esteem, I joyfully give my consent to an union, which will add to the completion of my child's felicity; and may thou, O pride of my first and only hope, rear thy children with the same parental fondness, I have ever made it my sole study to accomplish; and may they behave, in every respect, with the same filial affection my Louisa has evinced towards me on every occasion. This is, and ever will remain, with life, the perpetual prayers of your affectionate mother,

DELIFONT.



LET-

LETTER THE TWENTY-THIRD.

LADY LOUISA BEAUMONT TO THE
COUNTESS OF DELIFONT.

Berkley-Square.

MY dear, and ever honored Madam,
I received your kind consent to my union
with the amiable Lord Rivers. How ten-
derly do you express your fears for Louisa's
welfare; but don't be alarmed, my dear
mother, your child is in excellent spirits,
thanks to the assiduous attention of my
Lord, who is scarce ever absent, and when
present, will not permit the shadow of
gravity to make its appearance on my coun-
tenance. Indeed, I can never regret my
friendship with Lady Caroline, because it
will render me the adored consort of the
object my heart could ever own for its
choice.

choice. The more I see of his Lordship's disposition, the more it endears him to me. When an absent person's character is stigmatized, he is the first who will profess himself a candidate to vindicate the person whose reputation might be injured by malicious aspersions. His generosity does not end here, for he is the first among the number to contribute towards the relief of those who are in distress. But Lady Rake is arrived, and I am sent for in haste. I will conclude this when she is gone.—I have once more resumed my pen, in hopes of affording my dear mother pleasure from the intelligence of another's confirmed happiness. I informed you before, that Lady Rake was returned, but, to describe the pathetic meeting, it would be far above my small capacity; for, so delicate is Lady Caroline's sensibility, since this unforeseen accident, that the least surprise throws her into fainting fits; and Lady Rake, who is gentleness itself, used her most persuasive eloquence to sooth her dear friend, while repeated floods of tears, occasioned by astonishment at the painful situation in which she saw Caroline stopped her utterance—the uneasiness of mind she had endured from her father's indisposition—the fatigue of a long journey, from which they had just arrived,

rived, joined to the sight of her dear friend, caused hysterics. Imagine, if possible, the emotions of humanity, which, in spite of every effort to subdue, I found rise in my breast, upon entering the room, to behold my companion in infancy on the sofa—insensible to every one around her, and the woman, who had endured so many heart-piercing misfortunes, in such an early period of life, held by most of the servants, whose strength, when extended to the utmost, could scarcely hold her down. Oh, Heavens! I shudder—even now I shudder at the idea; and, to keep myself from a similar situation, I applied hartshorn to my nose. After they had recovered, and the different sensations of joy and sorrow were abated, Lady Rake informed us, that their intentions were to remain some time longer on the Continent, but for a circumstance which had occurred, and rendered their presence in town requisite. Her Ladyship proceeded to acquaint us, that Lord Rake was invited to dinner at an English nobleman's, but he declined the invitation.—Mr. Fitzhugh happening to be present, insisted on his Lordship accepting it, which, after a deal of persuasion he did. There was a great number of English nobility present, and the discourse turned on absent friends.

friends. A gentleman who had just arrived there from England, informed another, who was just returned from Italy, that Lord Belmont had been dead three months. The devil he has! replied the other.—Pray who inherits the title and estate? because his sister has no children, I think. I believe he was answered in the negative; but that there was a lawful heir to the estate and title, and he could not be found, nor his children either. If so, George Morrison would jump into that beautiful and wealthy estate. By G-d, it is a good thing for George, I believe he is but poorly off at present. This passed on, as Lord Rake did not think the death of a stranger worth repeating. Three or four months after, Mr. Fitzhugh was talking of writing a letter to Lord Belmont. Ah, replied his Lordship, in a facetious manner, he has the start of you, for once, he has wrote his last will and testament! His father-in-law eagerly demanded an explanation to such incomprehensible discourse:—He is dead, to be sure, returned my Lord. Impossible! it cannot be! It is neither impossible nor improbable, Sir, because the nobleman you just mentioned has been buried these seven months. Then there is an end of my brother. Your brother! Sir, you

you astonish me ! Yes, my dear boy, Lord Belmont was my brother. But, why did not you acquaint me with his death sooner ? You never informed me of your brother's name, therefore, how was it possible for me to know his Lordship was so near a relation to you Sir ? That is true, not even my amiable Harriot was ever made acquainted with his title. But, was he married ? Had he any children ? That is the point to be enquired into. If not, that estate, with your own, will make you one of the wealthiest men in the kingdom. Lord Rake assured him an heir was wanting at this present moment ; that he had been sought after every where, and the executors intended to bestow it on Mr. Morrison. Then it is a duty incumbent on me to return to England immediately, and place you and Harriot in quiet possession of every thing his Lordship has left, replied Mr. Fitzhugh. He communicated his intentions to Lady Rake, who joyfully assented to the proposal, and instantly prepared for a kind reception from her dear Caroline. The moment of her arrival she proceeded to Berkley-square, while her Lord, and father repaired to Sir Joseph Grevile's, who is husband to Mr. Fitzhugh's sister ; and now, my dear Madam,

that

that I have informed you of our present happiness, permit me to relinquish my pen, at this time, in the steady assurance of remaining for ever your dutiful daughter,

LOUISA BEAUMONT.



LET.

LETTER THE TWENTY-FOURTH.

LADY LOUISA

(In continuation.)

Berkley-square.

I Informed you, my honored mother, in my last, of Lady Rake and family's return. Her aunt, Lady Grevile, impatient to clasp her in her arms, accompanied her brother to the Earl's house, where another scene of joy and tears displayed itself to view. After this was ended, Lady Grevile said she was engaged to go with a party to the Pantheon the following evening, and insisted that all present should accompany them. We declined her solicitations, but without effect, for her Ladyship would not leave us till we had absolutely promised to accept the invitation. All we had to think of then, was a consultation

sultation upon the habits we should appear in. Lady Caroline chose the character of hope—I fixed on that of a shepherdess—and Lady Rake a haymaker. Lord Rake exhibited a harlequin—Lord Rivers a musician; the Earl of Hockinstone and Mr. Fitzhugh wore dominos. Thus habited, we proceeded, at ten o'clock, to the pantheon: We three seated ourselves, to observe the company that entered, and presently, a domino approaching, said to Lady Caroline, What says kind hope to a passionate lover? Be chearful and never despair while your mistress remains at her own disposal. She had scarce uttered these words, when an Eastern Monarch asked Lady Rake, How she subsisted in winter, when there was no haymaking to supply her wants? By following the laudable and inimitable example of the ants, I never experience real want. How is that? Why in summer I lay in a stock to prepare against winter, and by that means I live all the year alike. And a very prudent method too, my dear, replied the monarch, who, turning to me, cried, Where are your lambs, my pretty shepherdess? I replied, that I despaired of gaining protection for lambs, where there were so many wolves in sheep's cloathing, and, therefore,
I left

I left them at home. If there are so many wolves in sheep's cloathing, why should an innocent shepherdes attempt to venture among the throng? Here I knew not what answer to make, and Lady Rake, perceiving my embarrassment, replied, very pertly, I persuaded her to come, out of curiosity, that herself might be an eye witness what monsters reside in the world.—What, then if you had your will, I presume, we humble suppliants to Venus should not procure a little fresh prog from the country, now and then? No, you have had too much already. I never had any of you, my dear, now don't be so malicious. Nor I don't intend you ever shall, and that is more!—Well, if you will not permit me to enjoy your wit, pray don't spoil sport, by interrupting an agreeable tête-à-tête conversation between the shepherdes and me; and if you prove a faithful duenna, I will reward you handsomely. I was just going to return a very severe answer to this impertinent creature, when the Lords Rake and Rivers made their appearance; and I thought it would be prudent to remain silent, as I imagined the assuming monarch woul raise the siege, and carry his forces to a less secure citadel, when he found we were guarded; but he did not attempt to

quit the spot, not even when Lord Rivers informed him, that those Ladies were under his protection, and did not stand in need of another guardian. As to that, he replied, the more the merrier, and for that very reason he must attend the ladies. Then if you persist in this resolution, I must inform you, Sir, that you shall repent it. Come, come, interrupted Lord Rake, who had hitherto remained silent, this gentleman, Mr. Rattle, is an acquaintance of mine, and this Lady is my wife. That Lady Rake! G-d zounds, how shall I extricate myself? However, continued he, addressing himself to her Ladyship, you must pardon me, my dear Harriot, for my presumption, because you are confident it was done undesignedly. — If it is Mr. Rattle, she replied, in a sarcastical tone, your present behaviour is very consistent with your former conduct, and you will do me a favour to retire to another part of the room, Sir. He obeyed her commands with pleasure, I believe, for after making an awkward apology to me, he walked away with precipitance. We continued all together, till a scuffle ensued between two gentlemen, and the rooms being very full, we were divided. I was very much terrified at the idea of being separated
from

from the party ; but a gentleman in the character of a sailor accosted me, with Aloof, aloof, pull down your topmast sail, and bear to ! Split my bowsprit, but you are a tight little frigate ; jacket and trousers, if I have not a month's mind to veer round, and steer my course along side your keel. Have you any objection to heave anchor towards the coast of matrimony, I say ? Finding I made no answer to his dialect, but was striving to avoid such a rough attack, catching my arm at the same time, Avast, avast, don't cram so much sail ; shatter my main-mast if you sheer off without an engagement.—What the devil, have you no great guns on board ? As I found it was impossible to escape unless I returned an answer, I replied, he would oblige me very much by pursuing some other object. Come, let's have none of your small shot, haul in your stay-sails, and let your studding-sails be hove out. Mayhap you think I can't weather a storm ; but, by G—d, you are mistaken in your man. I'll fight a seventy-four yard-arm, and yard-arm, and not need lay by to refit neither. However, you're a nice frigate, neatly built, and well rigg'd, and so, d'ye see as how, I shou'dn't care for the matter of that, if

so be you and I kept company the remainder of the voyage of life. I could not refrain laughing, and determined to let him proceed without interruption, till I had an opportunity of meeting some of our party, when of a sudden he cried, Avast, lower your topmast, and slacken your sail. D'ye hear, take my advice, and stand in for the first port, unless you've a mind to be run aground by that great lubber that's bearing down upon us; not but what I am a good swimmer, d'ye see, and could reach shore; but mayhap you're a fresh-water sailor, and likely to sink under the first wave that reaches your stem. On turning myself round to discover the occasion of his sea-phrase harangue, I perceived a lady in the habit of Minerva, who I soon found was Lady Calista Evreymond. Her natural pride, aided by the dress she wore, served to render her figure stately and majestic. On her approach, she accosted me, by enquiring, if I had, like her, lost sight of my party? I replied in the affirmative, at the same time expressing a desire to continue in her Ladyship's company till I found some of them. The sailor gentleman perceiving his designs of keeping me from other company frustrated, continued his discourse

discourse in the following words: When I descried your top-gallant mast, I thought mayhap you might be in distress, and so, d'ye see, I weighed anchor, stood to sea, and a brisk gale springing up, I gave chase, and came up with you in latitude forty-nine, longitude nothing. But what's this, cried he, taking hold of my jacket, that flags out at your stern gallery? Mayhap 'tis meant for a signal of distress; but, by G—d, you're damnably mistaken, d'ye see, if so be as how you think any thing in your poop can be discerned thirty leagues off at sea. Oh, replied I, determining to answer him in his own language, it is only some of the rigging slackened from its hold, so go on with your narrative.—Well, as I was saying, I took you for a frigate carrying twenty guns, but I find you've got a great treasure on board by the convoy. I reckon, continued he, addressing himself to Lady Calista, you don't carry less than ninety guns.—A d——d heavy sailer, I see. Her Ladyship's answer was a scornful toss of the head.—Oh, if you are for commencing hostilities, I'll hold you a tug, d'ye see, though but a frigate of forty guns, I'll engage you, stem and stern, larboard and starboard, shatter your rigging, cut away

your masts, make sure of your stores, take possession of the frigate, hoist sail, and bear away for the first port. By this discourse I soon found this gentleman was no other than Sir John Melrose, who takes a delight in tormenting her Ladyship and sister. — But what confused noise is this assails my ears! I am called, therefore am obliged to lay down my pen to enquire the cause of this unaccountable alarm. I am called again — Oh, gracious God! The cause is too well explained for my future tranquillity. I never till this unfortunate fatal moment knew the extent of my affection for Lord Rivers! Ah, why was my life preserved to this crisis, if it is to endure perpetual misfortunes? Oh, Caroline, what wretchedness has thy heedless indiscretion cost thy friends? Yet, Oh, Louisa, overwhelmed as thou art at this present time with unhappiness, forbear to cast reflections on those who are already but too much oppressed with sorrow, sickness, and despair. No, rather let Louisa stifle that grief she is incapable of checking entirely, while she administers comfort to the distresses of her friend. — But what have I wrote? The agitation of my mind incapacitated me from being sensible of my error

error till it was too late to retract ; therefore, to quell the apprehensions which may by this time be rising in your breast, I must inform you, that Lord Rivers obliged his resentment towards Colonel M'Farson to lay dormant till to-day, on purpose to avoid any suspicion we might harbour of his intentions, and this fatal morning took an opportunity of meeting him in Hyde Park, where, presenting his sword, he demanded satisfaction for the insult offered Lady Caroline. His antagonist expostulated with him on the absurdity of a duel ; but all in vain. His Lordship was inexorable ; and, in short, for once in his life, insensible to every sensation but passionate resentment. They fought—the amiable Lord Rivers has a scratch on his arm, but the Colonel is dangerously wounded—and if he should die ! What, Ah, what will become of Louisa, whose future felicity is dependant on his Lordship's fate.— But to proceed : When he was brought home in a sedan chair, one of the female servants very imprudently ran to communicate the intelligence to Lady Caroline, adding, she verily believed he would bleed to death, for his cloaths were all in a gore of blood. This declaration, you may be assured, my

dear Madam, did not fail exciting her
 Ladyship's most tender apprehensions for
 a kind brother's life, and instantly spring-
 ing to the door, proclaimed my name
 aloud, while her injudicious informer
 joined in the cry. On descending the
 stairs, the first object that was presented to
 my view was Caroline prostrate on the
 floor in a swoon, and a few of the ser-
 vants exerting every effort to raise their
 lady. On inquiring the cause, I was in-
 formed that Lord Rivers was rather in-
 disposed. I was alarmed, and without at-
 tending to my amiable friend, rushed
 hastily down stairs in search of the Earl,
 who met me at the bottom. I asked
 eagerly how his son did, scarce sensible
 whether I uttered a syllable, so void of re-
 collection was I at the moment: He, sup-
 posing I was acquainted with the dreadful
 misfortune, made no hesitation of inform-
 ing me of every particular, and concluded
 with telling me, his Lordship must go to
 France, till the colonel's recovery. On
 consulting Lord Rivers, he declared his reso-
 lution was to pay my ever honoured mother
 a visit; his Lordship sets out this evening
 for our mansion. And now, my dear Madam,
 permit me to entreat you will keep his re-
 sidence with you, a profound secret, till I
 can,

can, with truth, assure you the Colonel's health is perfectly established. With what unfeigned pleasure shall I communicate the intelligence ! Believe me, my dear mother, I look forward to the approaching parting, with the most gloomy ideas imagination can form, deprived of the fascinating conversation of such an amiable companion as Lord Rivers. Direct me, if possible, how to pass the dreary hours, when separated from the man I love. Suffer me, once more, to recommend Lord Rivers to the care of my revered mother, while I remain her dutiful daughter,

LOUISA BEAUMONT.



LETTER THE TWENTY-FIFTH,

THE COUNTESS OF DELIFONT TO LADY
LOUISA BEAUMONT.

Goodwill Hall.

THAT Lord Rivers is arrived safe, is the first wish my child's heart can form, if I may judge of that by the kind expressions she involuntarily makes use of when addressing herself to a tender and indulgent mother. But I am determined to inflict no other punishment on the darling of my soul, than assuring her, I regard it as the lively fallies of a youthful imagination, rendered desperate by disappointment; nay, I remember that I was young myself, which a great number of elderly people have forgot, though they take care to forget no other circumstance which has occurred in the course of life.

I shall

I shall wave this subject to one which may be beneficial: It is that of spending your time to the best advantage. As the late duel, in which Lord Rivers was engaged, renders it impossible for you to appear in public, I would recommend walking in the morning, that your health may not be impaired by an unnecessary confinement in a room; and, in the evening, make use of the best authors you can select, and, by turns, you may amuse each other by reading; but avoid chusing such as have too many incidents relative to unfortunate amours, because that will awaken every tender sensation in the breast of Lady Caroline, which ought to lay dormant for ever. I hope my dear Louisa will not delay her return to the peaceful shades of rural felicity, where she will again meet her amiable Lord Rivers, who ardently wishes for her return. Though necessity, at present, compels your separation, don't suffer dejection to overshadow your mind, nor disagreeable ideas to find a harbour in your generous, sympathising breast; but remain satisfied, while you continue at the Earl's, in the full assurance that Lord Rivers is much more secure, under my protection, than it was possible for him to be, even in France, because he is, no doubt, suspected

suspected to be there at this moment, as no one would cherish a thought that his Lordship has sought shelter under my roof; and, should the Colonel die of his wounds, I don't apprehend his Lordship will have so much danger to encounter as your fear presents to an apprehensive imagination. Had not my Lord behaved in the courageous manner he has, by calling the Colonel to account for insulting a defenceless woman, and that woman his sister, would not the mis-judging world censure, and brand him with the ignominious appellation of a coward and dastardly disposition? Most assuredly. Neither would it rest here; for, very probably, a footman, who could raise twenty guineas to bribe a Russian to carry off her Ladyship, would make no hesitation, in the idea that her brother was afraid to chastise his presumptuous impudence; therefore, as affairs were, I think Lord Rivers performed a very prudent part; and I am confident he has gained the applause of all his sex, who cannot say he assaulted the Colonel unfairly, as he very judiciously delayed till the time he saw him in regimentals, which was a fit opportunity. Now let me ask my dear child one question: If you are thus alarmed at being deprived of the sight of a lover,

for.

for a short duration, how poignant must be the anguish your friend endures, on reflecting, that the man who has unwittingly caused tender emotions in her breast, is on the point of marriage with another; and when dissatisfaction shall arise, on account of the separation, compare your situation with that of Lady Caroline's, and, by soothing her distresses, which are likely to terminate life, strive to forget your own, which are but momentary. I will not add any thing further, at present, but my ardent wishes for yours and Lady Caroline's arrival at Delfont Park, which cannot be long, as Lord Rivers informs me the Earl of Hamwick's nuptials are irremediably fixed for the ensuing week, so that I shall not be deprived of my child's company much longer, and, in that pleasing idea, I remain your affectionate mother,

DELIFONT.

LET.

LETTER THE TWENTY-SIXTH.

THE EARL OF HAMWICK TO THE HON-
 OURABLE GEORGE SEYMOUR.

Portman-Square.

THAT I concluded my last with wretchedness, is true, and that I begin this with happiness is certain; yet, when I come to reflect on the sacrifice Henrietta has made of her future life, to enable me to arrive at the summit of my wishes, I feel a something within, which informs me my felicity is not well grounded. However, I must not suffer reflection to usurp over my more pleasing ideas, though I cannot help regretting, in the midst of every satisfactory sensation, that so fine a woman as Miss Hopkins should devote the remainder

remainder of her existence to a conventual life. Soon after I dispatched my last to you, the day for the solemnization of our nuptials was fixed, cloaths bought, equipage bespoke, and, in short, the time approached with precipitancy. When I imagined myself lost to every joy, my kind guardian angel was meditating my future felicity, for, the day before that fixed for the union, Mr. Hopkins was taken suddenly ill, and dispatched a servant to me, desiring my attendance immediately. I obeyed the summons, though I confess I was alarmed at the idea of his death.— When I arrived, Henrietta was sitting by his bedside, one hand clasped in that of her father's, while the other was suspended in a craving position, and her expressive blue eyes cast up to Heaven, as if supplicating for the restoration of her expiring father's life. Upon my approach, Mr. Hopkins stretched out his other hand, and taking one of mine, squeezed it with all the remaining strength he was possessed of, and then joined it with that of his daughter's, at the same time, entreating the Almighty to shed his effulgent rays over every action of our lives, and concluded with wishing us all the prosperity our disinterested dispositions deserved. He then desired

fired the clergyman might be sent for, to marry us, as he was very confident he should not live the night over. My fate was at the crisis, and I felt, too severely, the anguish of my heart, to keep it invincible from Henrietta, whose penetration instantly discerned the change in my countenance, and declined yielding to her father's commands, urging his indisposition as a sufficient excuse for deferring the marriage. Commands and entreaties proved abortive! she was inexorable to every persuasive argument her father could suggest. At last, as he found his dissolution approaching, he addressed himself to her in the following words:—As I see my dear Henrietta is determined not to render the few moments I shall enjoy in this world happy, by thus resolutely setting all my commands at defiance, I must insist upon your solemn promise, that you will not marry any other man but the Earl of Hamwick. Oh, my dear father, she replied, bursting into tears, I will most readily comply with that command; and here I vow, by every power in heaven and earth, never to think of any other man for my husband but the Earl of Hamwick, and as I adhere to this vow, may I be blessed or cursed accordingly. After uttering

ing

ing a few incoherent sentences, he breathed his last in the arms of Henrietta. But, Oh George! had you beheld the lovely mourner, absorbed in tears and silent anguish, you never would have forgot it. My cares were all lost in that moment, to sooth the agonies she in vain strove to conceal. No frantic exclamations found vent from her mouth, her sorrows were of a more poignant and lasting duration. At last, the power of speech was restored, and that amiable woman expressed a desire to be left alone. I obeyed, though I own, it was for the first time in my life, that I quitted a room with reluctance where Miss Hopkins was. On my return home, I laid down a plan for my future life, as I considered it a most heinous crime, and cowardly disposition to reject Henrietta, now she had no father to resent the insults and injury offered her; and looked on myself as her only surviving protector. I did not fail calling at the house, every day, to enquire after her health, till the day of the funeral, at which solemn and awful ceremony I was present, and Henrietta appeared to receive every condolence with a resigned fortitude that I did not imagine she was capable of; and I found my conjectures true, for, under an apparent serene

rene mind, she disguised a heart fraught with every afflicting anguish it was possible for human nature to endure. Before I left the house, she took an opportunity to inform me she was going into the country the next day, to prevent my calling. I was surprised at the inconsistency of her behaviour, as it then appeared to me; but the space of two days sufficiently explained every mysterious circumstance that had occurred. In reading the following copy of a letter I received from her, you will see the struggles she has contended with.

COPY

C O P Y.

MISS HOPKINS TO THE EARL OF
HAMWICK.

" My Lord,

" BEFORE you receive this I shall
" be some hundred miles distant from the
" metropolis, and my determination is
" fixed never to return to it again. Very
" probably you may be rather surpris'd
" at this unexpected declaration from me,
" when you reflect on the situation of af-
" fairs between us. But suspend asto-
" nishment, and call to mind the absurd
" contract which was intended to bind
" our vows; but, above all, think on the
" solemn oath I made my father on his
" death bed. When you have duly weigh-
" ed these circumstances in your mind,
" impute not my present consistent beha-
" viour to capricious fancy, but permit
" every disagreeable prejudice that may
" occur against me to cease, when I in-
" form

“ form you I never can be your Lord-
 “ ship’s wife. For which reason I have
 “ fixed a resolution, that is not to be
 “ shaken by the most flattering allure-
 “ ments, to seclude myself from the society
 “ of every friend I have; and to com-
 “ plete this the more effectually my in-
 “ tentions are to settle myself in a convent,
 “ where, after I have received the vows
 “ of celibacy, you may depend on hear-
 “ ing from me once more, and then all
 “ commerce with the world will terminate
 “ for ever. Your Lordship will surely
 “ pardon the frank confession I am on the
 “ point of making, when you consider it
 “ is a weak woman who is addressing her-
 “ self to you, in the assurance that my
 “ presence shall no longer excite disgust
 “ in that breast wherein I once aspired
 “ to create love. I am very confident I
 “ have been unfortunately till this period
 “ the unfurmountable, though innocent,
 “ obstacle which had almost deprived you
 “ of happiness in the person of the object
 “ you admire. Indeed it would be im-
 “ possible for you to make a better choice
 “ than Lady Caroline Rivers, and the si-
 “ tuation you first saw her Ladyship in
 “ undoubtedly excites your utmost com-
 “ passion, and when compassion flows with
 “ sincerity

“ sincerity from the opposite sex, it is very
 “ seldom that it does not heighten into
 “ a more tender name. Yet Lady
 “ Caroline is the only one of my sex I
 “ could with any degree of propriety yield
 “ the man of my choice to, without a
 “ sigh of bitter regret; but I submit to
 “ one whose superior and amiable attrac-
 “ tions cannot fail to render your bliss
 “ perfectly complete. And I will now
 “ inform your Lordship, that at the time
 “ the contract was signed I sincerely loved
 “ you, if I may be permitted to call a
 “ giddy headstrong passion by that affec-
 “ tionate and endearing title. The little
 “ assiduities your natural politeness obli-
 “ ged you to pay me after it was past, I
 “ terminated into proofs of your increas-
 “ ing attachment. I blush at the recol-
 “ lection of my past folly, when I did not
 “ give myself time to reflect that there
 “ was a possibility your affections could not
 “ be fixed on me. While you remained
 “ in Italy I flattered myself in the pleasing
 “ idea, that on your return I should be
 “ presented with a heart free from every
 “ other impression but that my image had
 “ stamped on your mind; but that illu-
 “ sive idea was quickly shaken, and to-
 “ tally vanished on the first moment you
 “ made

" made your appearance. The eyes of
 " lovers are allowed uncommon penetra-
 " tion; I possessed it at that moment; yet
 " do not imagine your Lordship appeared
 " culpable in my sight; no, I was sensi-
 " ble of your late attachment; I had ex-
 " perience the severe conflict of love;
 " it was that first taught me pity, and
 " next compassion for your situation.—
 " While my father remained in this world
 " I dreaded his displeasure should I pre-
 " sume to reject your Lordship for a hus-
 " band; and I was confident that I must
 " not expect to receive felicity in the con-
 " jugal state with a man who scarcely
 " esteemed me. How wretched must the
 " sensations of that woman be, whose
 " cruel doom is irretrievably fixed to lin-
 " ger out her future days with a man,
 " whose evident scorn evinces the utter de-
 " testation with which he receives the ten-
 " der caresses of the person, that the solemn
 " nuptial vow commands him to love,
 " respect, and cherish. At other times,
 " that envious fury Jealousy strove to rush
 " like a torrent on my mind, to excite ve-
 " nomous revenge, which had been till
 " this time a stranger to my breast, whose
 " innocence was of so pure a nature, that
 " my astonishment has often been excited
 " (when

“ (when I have heard any one mention re-
 “ venge and jealousy to be the inseparable
 “ companions of a love-sick heart, render-
 “ ed desperate by a cool neglect) to think
 “ what rancorous passions they were; lit-
 “ tle did my thoughtless disposition per-
 “ mit me to reflect that those abominable
 “ furies were ordained to predominate
 “ over every other more amiable qua-
 “ lity, and obliterate the remembrance of
 “ charming virtue from my soul; and
 “ then again I determined to refuse your
 “ involuntary proffered alliance, and ac-
 “ quaint my father with the motives which
 “ had actuated me to reject your compul-
 “ sive suit; but thank heaven that every
 “ various resolution I formed did not ar-
 “ rive at any conclusion, but vanished
 “ before I had thoughts of putting them
 “ in execution; for, by delaying them, I
 “ have it in my power at last to make you
 “ happy in the person of the only woman
 “ you so justly adore, by delivering up
 “ the contract that has occasioned your
 “ Lordship so much uneasiness; you will
 “ find it inclosed in this. Farewell! —
 “ I would have returned it in person,
 “ but was apprehensive your gratitude
 “ would render you forgetful of the duty
 “ you owe Lady Caroline, by obliging
 Vol. I. K “ me,

“ me, through your too fascinating per-
 “ suasive arguments, to renounce my fer-
 “ vent intentions; therefore, to put that
 “ entirely out of your power, I have not
 “ divulged the secret of my destination
 “ to any one; nor will I, till it is an im-
 “ possibility to retract the step my father’s
 “ death has obliged me to take. I have
 “ nothing further to add, but my perpe-
 “ tual prayers for your Lordship’s eternal
 “ felicity, both in this transitory world,
 “ and in that which is everlasting.

“ HENRIETTA HOPKINS.”

“ P. S. I had almost forgot to inform
 “ your Lordship that the sooner your mar-
 “ riage with Lady Caroline is concluded,
 “ the more happiness I shall enjoy from
 “ the moment I am acquainted with it.

“ Adieu.”

I will

I will conclude you have read Henrietta's letter by this time; therefore I shall not hesitate to inform you her generosity drew tears from my eyes; and had I known where to find her, I should have insisted on fulfilling the contract by an instant marriage. I made every enquiry after Miss Hopkins, but they proved abortive. Finding my search in vain, I went to the Earl of Hockinstone's, and declared to his Lordship the affection I entertained for Lady Caroline, and solicited his permission to divulge my passion to her Ladyship. He, at first, received my proposals with astonishment, but, recovering his surprize, asked me whether my love was voluntary? Voluntary! I repeated; Oh, my Lord, can you imagine me capable of duplicity towards your amiable daughter? I have loved Lady Caroline, with the most unfeigned affection, from the first moment I beheld her, and had I been at liberty — Here I paused, and the Earl, taking this opportunity, eagerly enquired, whether the report that was propagated concerning my marriage with another lady was not apocryphal? I replied in the negative. Then why do you pretend to make proposals to me, my Lord, in behalf of my daughter, when

you are already engaged? Your Lordship must pardon me, I replied, at the same time putting Henrietta's letter into his hand, this will explain every mystery. After reading, the Earl returned it, saying he was perfectly satisfied; adding that my visit was very *apropos*, as his intentions were to escort Lady Caroline into the country the next day; but as affairs were situated he should defer their intended journey for the present, and if I would accompany them it would be the more agreeable. I replied he did me honor, and I was ready to attend them at any time the ladies, or his Lordship, chose to command. We settled that the Earl should acquaint Lady Caroline with my proposals; in short, he assured me of success, and I was to make preparation to accompany them into the country this day. The motive for their going into the country at this time is, because Lord Rivers is obliged to secrete himself there at present, as he has had a duel with the Colonel, and wounded him dangerously; however he is something better, and, though he bears such a profligate character, I sincerely hope he will recover on my amiable friend's account, as he was the challenger. God grant the Colonel a heart truly susceptible

ceptible of humanity, and every virtuous principle. — If my conjectures do not prove fallacious, we shall have a double wedding, as there is a most amiable young lady on a visit at the Earl's, for whom Lord Rivers has rejected an alliance with the Duke of Delmore's family. I have had an interview with Lady Caroline, who not only approves, but returns my passion as I could wish. Oh, George, she is a divine woman! I must prepare for my departure; and, as your last informed me of your intention to return to England, you will not receive any more from me; therefore I shall, with sincerity, subscribe myself,

Your fortunate friend,

HAMWICK.

LETTER THE TWENTY-SEVENTH.

LADY RAKE TO LADY GREVILLE.

Hockinstone Hall.

Dear Madam,

WE arrived here three days since, and our romantic lovers are to be united to-morrow morning; but could you behold the foolish appearance the ladies make, it is truly laughable; the little pert Caroline strives to rally her amiable friend for dejection of spirits, while she can scarce support her own; though, indeed, she is a most amiable character; more sweetness of disposition, affability, and condescension were never united in any one person. I, who have experienced the extent of her Ladyship's friendship, when the displeasure of my father obliged me to seek other protection, by placing myself under her subjection,

subjection, must know that her benignity far exceeds all my former female acquaintance; had it not been for Lady Caroline I should never have been the happy wife of my kind Lord, neither could I have been reconciled with my affectionate father, had it not been for her Ladyship's interference, whose sympathising heart is beyond all comparison. And had not a reconciliation with my father been obtained, how could I with propriety have claimed an alliance with my amiable aunt? — Did you ever hear such an unaccountable humorist as Lady Caroline? who had stole into my room unperceived while I was giving her character; and, would you believe it, she has had the audacity to abuse me for drawing such an amiable portrait of her. — However, we are all life and spirits, and only wish for the pleasure of your company to enliven and complete the scene of our happiness; but as that cannot be obtained I will not finish this letter till the happy day is over, as I mean to give my dear aunt a description of the cavalcade. The bridegrooms are as happy as possible for men to be, and are never separated from the ladies, for Lady Caroline will not permit Lady Louisa to return to Delifont Park till the marriage

has taken place. — The Countess of Delifont is arrived, and I must resign my pen for the present, as Lady Louisa will not permit me to proceed.

It is all over ! Yesterday two of the most amiable couple in the universe were inseparably united, and now, according to my promise above, I must give you an account of the procession, which was as follows :—The Earl being determined to have it public, therefore the state coach, which is kept at the family mansion, to be used only on particular occasions, had six cream-coloured horses put to it, whose foreheads were adorned with white favors ; into this Lady Caroline and the Earl of Hockinstone were conducted. Her Ladyship's dress was silver muslin, and I never saw her look more lovely than she did this day. The next which drove up was a state coach belonging to the Delifont family, with six white horses, decorated with favors. Into this Lord Belmont conducted Lady Louisa
Beaumont

Beaumont, arrayed in a blue and silver tissue, beautifully ornamented. The next was the Earl of Hockinstone's other carriage, with four horses, into which the Earl of Hamwick conducted Miss Brown, as one of the bride's-maids, dressed in lilac and silver, and, as she is very pretty, her dress set her off to advantage. The next was the Countess of Delifont's other carriage, with four horses, into which Lord Rivers led a Miss Williams, who was dressed in pink and silver. The next was Lord Rivers's, into which the honorable Mr. Bolingbroke conducted Lady Eliza Cathcart, whose dress was a silver crape, over white silk. Our carriage was the next, in which I was conducted by the honourable Mr. St. John; my Ladyship's dress was an Indian painted gauze, trimmed with silver gauze over a pale pink silk. Lady Caroline's carriage (now Countess of Hamwick) closed the procession, with my Lord and the Countess of Delifont, whose dress was brown and silver. A Mr. Fordyce, who came just as we were driving off, we were obliged to put in the last coach, and he confirmed the agreeable news you sent us of the Colonel's recovery. But I must proceed with my narrative, otherwise I shall be interrupted before I have

have time to finish it. When the carriages drove up to the church-yard, where Lady Caroline alighted, with her father, they were met by six young girls, dressed in white, with baskets of flowers in their hands, which they strewed before her all the way into the church. Lady Louisa was ushered into church in the same manner. I had almost forgot that six young boys were employed in the same office, for each of the bridegrooms, that the females were for the brides, only with this difference, that one of them made a mistake, followed, and supported my train, and I do assure your Ladyship, it rendered the appearance of your humble servant as stately as Minerva herself. My father insisted upon being father-giver to Lady Louisa, declaring that it was but justice, because the Earl of Hockinstone had deprived him of that pleasure in the person of his only child; and if Lady Louisa, would not permit him the honour of giving her to the arms of Lord Rivers, he would assert the right of Lady Caroline's father, and steal off with her and Lord Hamwick to the altar. However, Lady Louisa consented to my father's proposals, and after the ceremony was performed, the Earl

Earl of Hockinstone and Lord Belmont, resigned their charges to their respective owners, therefore the bride's-maids, who went with the bridegrooms, were obliged to return with the father-givers.——From the description of this wedding, your Ladyship may conceive the numerous crowd of spectators who attended us, with every demonstration of joy. The bridegrooms, and the Earl of Hockinstone, with the Countess of Delifont, were very profuse in their gifts to the villagers, who joined in a rustic dance in the hall where we passed through. In the evening we had a ball, at which we had a numerous assemblage of beautiful women, and pretty gentlemen, scented with bergamot. We did not break up till five this morning.—The Countess of Hamwick, and Lady Rivers have commissioned me to inform you that our return to town is fixed for the next week, when the Countess of Delifont will accompany us, and their intention is to stay till after the birth-day, as our Lords (including my own among the rest) intend to have us introduced, on that day, to their Majesties, in consequence of our marriages, and you know I have not had that honour yet. And now, my dear Madam,

permit

permit me to conclude this, with fresh assurances of my every moment's increasing affection for my dear aunt, while I remain her dutiful niece,

HARRIOT RAKE.



E E T.

LETTER THE TWENTY-EIGHTH.

MISS HOPKINS TO THE EARL OF
HAMWICK,

Convent of St. Clare.

I AM now, my Lord, comparatively speaking, happy, and to-morrow is the day fixed, by my own request, that I am to receive the veil, and then adieu to the empty allurements of this delusive world, in which I have experienced every kind of duplicity the few years of my residence in it. I may with sincerity aver, that there is no one circumstance in the course of my life, worthy to shake a resolution so beneficial as that of secluding myself from a world which has no charms remaining for the unfortunate Henrietta. Deprived in
my

my youthful days, of an affectionate father, where could I avoid the malicious aspersions of calumny and scandal, which for ever pursue an unprotected female, so securely as in a religious house? And now that I am confident even your monarch's efforts to regain me from the convent, after I have professed myself of the order, would prove ineffectual, I will relinquish the affected shame of my sex, while I unfold my mind to your Lordship, by informing you of the excruciating tortures, and heart piercing pangs I experienced ere I could bring myself to the painful resolution of tearing your deep-imprinted image from my breast, where it had been preserved with a faithful and unconquerable fidelity for years. But ah! that happiest period of my life, wherein I vainly imagined your roving heart returned a reciprocal ardor to my unfeigned affection, has, for some time, been consigned to oblivion's obscure recess, where none but the most wretched of human beings harbour a thought of directing their steps. But as this is the last time I shall have occasion to address your Lordship, I may be permitted to divulge, that when I was dictating my last to you, how many times,

in

in hopeless misery, I have flung away my pen, despairing to rise above myself in this one instance, of resigning you for ever; and then again, generosity, animated by the pleasing sensations of rendering your felicity compleat, in preference to my own, how often did I resume it! At first, bewildered imagination presented every method to my agitated mind, in hopes of inspiring you with a spark of affection. I perceived your humanity was considerably extended, at the time of my father's death, towards the object who had been so lately your particular aversion. But humanity alone was not what my love for you required. I was covetous, and desired your whole heart. That was not yours to bestow. I reflected on the similar situation between your present Lady and myself: I also considered myself as an orphan, who, to no one belonged, by no one beloved.— On the other side, powerful imagination presented to my view the Earl of Hockinstone, in the character of a tender father, weeping and lamenting, in silent anguish, over the tomb of his darling child, deprived of life in the flower of youth, and bloom of beauty, through my cruelty.— The idea was too shocking for sensibility

to

to endure, and I chose rather to have my name obliterated from the memory of every one, rather than render it conspicuous by base acts of injustice; and I determined to adopt the method I have since executed with success, for I find my mind placid and serene, at present, and make no doubt but I shall enjoy as much happiness, in a short time, in this place, as it would have been possible for me to receive, had I been your Lordship's wife; for here, amusement has no predominance over our intellectuals, by alluring us to swerve from our duty, therefore I am of opinion, your attachment to Lady Caroline was intended for my preservation. And now that I have performed my promise, suffer me to add, that my prayers for you and the amiable Countess, flow incessantly from a sincere heart, which is ready, on every occasion, to congratulate your Lordship on any felicity you may receive; and, in these assurances, I must bid a long and last farewell to the man through whose means, I trust, with the assistance of the Almighty, I shall receive eternal bliss in the world to come.—I scarce know how to finish, when I reflect that this puts a period to every correspondence, yet, though the idea is at present

sent repugnant, fortitude and resignation
will surmount every obstacle, and in that
hope, I subscribe myself your fortunate
friend,

HENRIETTA HOPKINS.

F I N I S.



I. H. 207

